Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

HARRY POLLITT

The Communist Crusade

TEUTONICUS

Six Years of Hitler

A Letter of Engels

FEBRUARY 1939 SIXPENCE

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 21 FEBRUARY 1939 NUMBER 2

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

CONTENTS

	Page
The Communist Crusade *By* HARRY POLLITT	67
Germany After Six Years of Hitler *By* TEUTONICUS	80
The Revolt of the Farmers *By* MAURICE CORNFORTH	95
Let Capital Clear the Lines *By* J. H. HOPE	102
A Letter of Engels	108
A Powerful Weapon of Bolshevism	111
Documents of the Month	116
Book Reviews	122

A Classic of Marxism by WALTER CRAMER
A Mixed Bag by A. L. MORTON
Our England by CHRISTOPHER HILL

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We regret to have to inform our readers that the Editor has been seriously ill with pneumonia, and that in consequence the usual Notes of the Month do not appear in this number. We are glad to say that he is now recovering, and we hope that it will be possible for him to resume his contributions in the near future. We know that our readers will share our regrets and hopes.

The absence of the Notes of the Month, although adding to the normal difficulties of the LABOUR MONTHLY, *will not impair the valuable Marxist service which it is acknowledged to be.*

The temporary loss of the Editor to the journal, in the midst of such serious events as Chamberlain's visit to Rome, coupled with the advance of the Italian and German forces against Barcelona behind the crushing weight of fascist planes and munitions, doubles the need for an offensive in Britain against fascist developments here and abroad. It doubles the weight of responsibility which falls on the LABOUR MONTHLY. *We want our readers to help us in this direction. Read again the appeal printed in the January number. Contribute generously to the Guarantee or Development Fund. And thus act directly in the fight for the defence of democracy and working-class liberty, for the defence of the Spanish Republic and the advancement of unity.*

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The Communist Crusade

BY HARRY POLLITT

THE COMMUNIST PARTY has launched its Crusade for the defence of the lives and livelihood of the British people at this serious moment in our destinies because we have unshakable faith in the common people—the men and women of the factories and offices; countryside, professions and trade unions—members of political parties and the Co-operative movement. We are confident they will yet unite their forces, and drive out Chamberlain and his Government which has led Britain to the edge of disaster.

We launch our Crusade because we know that the existing poverty, unemployment, low wages, speed up and high prices, growth in preventable sickness and undernourishment, alongside the piling up of armaments, rising profits and fear of war, are all the result of the National Government policy at home and abroad. We know that our country is dominated by a handful of bankers, landlords and profiteers, who have allied themselves with the fascist powers, in order to protect the maintenance of rent, interest and profit for themselves.

Our Crusade is a definite challenge to every vested interest of monopoly capital. It is a clear call to action to all men and women of good will—it is an urgent summons in the name of liberty to all lovers of justice, to improve the conditions of the majority of the people, to secure work for all, decent homes, to extend social services, strengthen the Labour movement and curb the greed of the rich so that health and happiness will be within the reach of everyone, at the same time as the mass movement towards Socialism is given a new impetus and force.

The defence of the British people against poverty and war, the opportunity for development—that is the keynote of our Crusade.

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We are determined that the British people shall take its rightful place in all forms of social advance, extension of democratic rights and liberties, and in building up an indestructible peace alliance of all nations who have no interest in war, but desire, on the basis of collective security, to protect each other and live in peace. This is the object of our Crusade. Every man and woman who believes in reason and freedom, justice, liberty and peace can support us whatever their views may be on the ultimate development of the present system.

We have no illusions about the magnitude of the task, or of the confusion, difficulties and vested interests that stand in the way. But the moment is ripe for advance. The people are awakening as never before to an understanding of the full consequences of Chamberlain's policy. It is being realised that the fight against it is not only because of Munich and questions of foreign policy, but because the situation in Britain itself on all domestic issues facing the people is serious and is inevitably bound up with foreign policy as well. It is in fact a single fight against Chamberlain's policy as a whole.

It may be that questions of foreign policy have tended to assume major importance and publicity, but there is now a growing recognition that it is not a question of some "temporary weakness" on the part of Chamberlain, or that "Chamberlain is only wrong on foreign policy," that has brought Britain to its present position, but that it is the result of a consistent and determined pro-fascist policy as a whole, carried out by Chamberlain on behalf of monopoly capitalism.

The plain fact is that Britain to-day is ruled by a Government which prepares a way for the advance of fascism in Britain as well as supporting fascist aggression abroad. Chamberlain and the ruling gang of Britain are the enemies of democracy and the natural friends of fascism. For hundreds of years the people of our country have been fighting against the forebears of this clique to secure rights of free speech, free press and free organisation, the right to join trade unions and political parties.

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Chamberlain and his Cliveden set—reactionary diehards to the core—are envious of Hitler's and Mussolini's successful destruction of the Labour movement in Germany and Italy. They would like to pursue a similar policy here, by purely " British methods " of course. They are the class enemies of the Labour movement and have always tried to restrict its advance and growth. They are alarmed at the growth of the liberation movement in the Colonies; they detest the Soviet Union, the forerunner of the new world social order.

The result of this policy of monopoly capitalism is seen in the situation in Britain and abroad. Millions of trade unionists and unorganised workers have to eke out an existence on a weekly wage far below the subsistence level defined by a capitalist economist as essential. Our Depressed Areas are forgotten areas. Men have to go to the length of lying down in the snow at Christmastime and carrying coffins in mock funeral processions, in order to arouse the social conscience of the people to the horrors of unemployment. Tens of thousands of mothers are driven distracted by disease and anxiety that could be prevented to-morrow if they were allowed adequate means of existence.

This is why everything that concerns the health and happiness of the people is subordinated in the interests of the monopolists—markets sacrificed, agriculture destroyed, so that the feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction in the countryside rises in volume every week. It is why prices and profits are high, alongside the declining manufactures and exports which have increased unemployment by half-a-million in a year. This explains why there is a demand from the monopolists for a further restriction in the social services, and continued attempts to restrict the democratic rights and liberties of the people, and why not a single constructive measure is brought forward to stave off the approaching trade slump.

It is because of this pro-fascist policy that the National Government has sabotaged every effort of other democratic nations to build up a common peace front, destroyed collective security in the self interests of reactionary imperialists and fascists, rendered the League of Nations impotent, sacrificed

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small nations and proposed reactionary alliances that would give Hitler a free hand against the Soviet Union. They have joined in the fascist conspiracy to destroy everything the common people expect from life, and to crush every democratic and progressive movement among the masses.

It is this combination of facts which makes the organising of the defeat of Chamberlain the immediate supreme task for the Labour and democratic forces in Britain. Everything else in politics is not just secondary to this ; everything else in life and politics, a happy life, preservation of liberty, security of peace, and any real advance towards working class power and Socialism are all dependent and bound up with this.

It should be the proud privilege and duty of the official Labour leaders to be the foremost in now attempting to bring together all those of whatever party, grouping or movement, who are in opposition to the policy of Chamberlain. It is the refusal of the Labour leaders to do this that is Chamberlain's strongest capital, and why he continues to get away with it. Just as it is the division amongst the democratic states that is the strongest capital of Mussolini and Hitler.

If the people of all parties, groupings and classes, who are in opposition to the National Government ; if their minds, ideas, oratory, pens, power and organisations, were welded together in a common movement to fight poverty and unemployment, defend democracy and peace, we could really begin to transform conditions in Britain and open the way to peace and plenty, and at the same time this could play a leading rôle in a solid, impregnable peace front.

Instead of all this new political awakening and alarm on the gravity of the present position being welcomed and encouraged, stimulated and actively led by the dominant group of Labour leaders, it is either cold-shouldered, ignored, or the basest insinuations put forward as to what it is that really lies behind it. It would appear that only the dominant group of Labour leaders are possessed of honesty of purpose and sincerity of aim. It is time to end this. In my report to the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party in September

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last, in this particular connection, we stated :

> It is politically very short-sighted not to recognise these developments and to ignore the importance of bringing all these sections of the people and their organisations into co-operation with the Labour Movement. It is necessary to recognise that at the present decisive moment, neither the working class alone nor these other sections of the people are able by themselves, with their present divided forces, to bring about the immediate changes in policy that are required and that can lay the sure basis for defeating Chamberlain.
>
> The ruling class in Britain has always carried through the policy of " divide and conquer." Once again the most reactionary sections of monopoly capital are trying to carry through this policy in order, *gradually, to establish fascism in Britain.*
>
> The chief task of the moment is to put an end to the policy of the Chamberlain clique, and to reach an understanding over a common programme in the interests of all who are directly affected. We should regard them all as equal comrades in arms against the common danger, the common enemy, and in the struggle for their common interests.
>
> The Labour Movement which is better organised than other sections of the population, is also more experienced in struggle and therefore should recognise as a duty the bringing together of all useful forces.

It is because we have confidence in the working class, know its capacities, its initiative, its genius for organisation and leadership, that we are not afraid to make our proposals for Labour taking the initiative in bringing together all the opponents of Chamberlain's policy, and replacing his Government with a Government pledged to the real defence of the people in every aspect of life, by carrying out a policy of social justice, democracy and peace.

We are confident that in such a Government, however broad its personnel, there will be no deflection of the aims of the mass movement or sidetracking of the needs and demands of the people, because its main power will rest on Labour —on Labour organised in the factories, Trade Unions and Co-operatives, which would be strong enough to ensure that the interests of the common people—the overwhelming majority of British citizens—came before the narrow vested interests of the reactionaries.

The situation is too serious to be content with propaganda

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for the coming together of the people's forces. It can and must be done now, in every locality and district, as every opportunity affords, despite any official opposition to such forms of united action and co-operation.

We have had so many, many, examples of the effectiveness of campaigns when they are based on common co-operation and action. The successful Rent Strikes ; the campaign around the Youth Charter, and the prominence being given to the demands of Youth, as seen in the recent Youth Hearing ; the Foodships and the medical supplies for Spain ; the part played in Spain by the British Battalion, composed of men of all parties and sections of the population to whose deeds C. R. Attlee, M.P., has paid great tribute; help for China—all these are the practical things that have been accomplished by men and women of all sections of the people, and that have helped forward the mass movement against Chamberlain as well as helping the Spanish and Chinese people to put up their marvellously heroic resistance to fascism.

The masses must break through the barriers that have been erected to prevent the unity of all who want to fight Chamberlain, by leaders, who only see themselves, and not the people, by leaders who are afraid of either assuming direct governmental responsibility or sharing it with others in the present difficult situation, and who attempt to cover up their tracks by talking loudly about Socialism.

But the fight for Socialism is not conducted in a vacuum ; it is not an abstract thing. The advance to Socialism is only possible by the continuous fight against capitalism; by being able to seize on the next link in the chain in any given situation; by developing the class consciousness of the masses in struggle; and by Marxist education ; by leading and uniting the struggle of the masses for higher wages, shorter hours, holidays with pay ; by actively fighting against unemployment. But where is there such a fight being led by the official labour leaders to-day ? The same leaders, now so loudly professing their loyalty to Socialism, are those most notorious in damping down any active united struggle to secure the demands of their own members.

The present position of the Labour movement, in which no

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attempt is made to unite the struggles of three million trade unionists who are demanding wage increases, and the situation in many important areas in regard to Labour Party organisation, the divided counsels and leadership, the confusion, the refusal to give direct leadership to the daily fight against capitalism, are the self condemnation of the deliberately deceitful character of the present "socialist" posturings of so many of its leaders.

There is not a serious man or woman in the Labour movement who would not recognise in the defeat of Chamberlain a tremendous victory for the democratic forces in Britain and the world as a whole. Who would fail to recognise it as a big step forward, however broadly based the Government that succeeded it might be? *For it would be a victory over fascism.* In the conditions of the present moment this would be one of the most important contributions that could be made in the movement towards the future conquest of power and the establishment of Socialism.

Only fools will argue that it is now easier to realise socialism in Austria, Italy, Germany and Czechoslovakia, than it was when they had a democratic régime. And yet the issue with which we are confronted in Britain is the prevention of the advance of fascism at home as much as it is to prevent an extension of fascist influence and territory abroad.

When the Chamberlain candidates are defeated now in any by-election, whether as at Dartford or at Bridgwater, it is hailed as a defeat for Chamberlain. This is true, but how much more important it is to organise and be sure of achieving the decisive defeat of Chamberlain at the next General Election. The tragedy of the present position is that it is recognised on all sides that this victory could be achieved if the whole forces opposed to Chamberlain were united on an agreed programme thus ensuring only one anti-Chamberlain candidate in every constituency.

A recent Editorial in the *Daily Herald* and an article by Mr. Marchbank in the *Railway Review* practically admitted this; only it was argued it would mean Labour losing its independence and socialist basis. It would not. And those who state this know it would not. Labour has established

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its claim to an independent existence. Its programme and principles are widely known and adopted. But it has not reached that stage which would guarantee that it alone could defeat Chamberlain and form a Labour Government. Correct political leadership in the light of the actual facts and circumstances to-day will strengthen Labour's position; for whatever agreements, alliances or programmes are adopted to meet the present terrible emergency—this new situation in Britain, where it is governed by men who want fascism and support it in every possible way—the main basis of the Labour movement is, and must always be, in the factories, trade unions, co-operatives, and local party organisations.

The fight for Socialism cannot be separated from the current struggle and situation, from the present relation of forces and issues. It cannot be placed in some watertight compartment divorced from all the objective facts of life at this moment when millions of our people are in want, when one-fourth of the world's people are engaged in a life and death struggle against fascism, and when millions in Britain fear that the flames and destruction of war may reach their own homes and families.

It is precisely because we also desire Socialism—and we think we may claim we desire it more earnestly and keenly than the Bevins, Marchbanks, and Morrisons—that we Communists are so insistent in the Labour movement taking the lead in organising, in a common movement and programme, all those who oppose Chamberlain. We, as Communists, as Marxists, are ready to co-operate with all, who at the present moment see that the ridding of this country of Chamberlain and his gang is the supreme political task that confronts every one of us, and that there can be no decisive advance of any kind until there is complete reversal of the whole domestic and foreign policy of this country. We are not afraid that the Labour movement "will lose its independence" or that "it will be compromised by entangling alliances" or "that the fight for Socialism will be retarded," or any of the other fatalist and defeatist phrases now so current in the Labour Party, just because we have faith in the working class; just because we know that everything the

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movement stands for, and has achieved by long years of struggle and sacrifice against capitalism now stands in danger from Chamberlain and fascism, and that the next stage in the struggle is to win the immediate victory over these forces.

At the same time as we fight for the carrying through of such a policy as this, it is necessary to emphasise time and time again, that the greatest stimulus which could be given to this movement would be if the working class itself were united. This is one of the great weaknesses of the present position which leads to such great divergence of effort and activity, to so many misunderstandings, that tends to spread confusion. Whereas if the Labour movement itself were united, the existing political situation could be changed in a week.

Added urgency is given to this precisely because of the growth of the opposition to Chamberlain in the historic parties of capitalism—the Liberal and Tory parties. The Sinclairs, Edens, Churchills and Duff Coopers, have fundamental aims different and opposed to those of the Labour movement. But they are also the expression of political unrest and disquiet amongst sections of the population, who, for the first time, are finding themselves in opposition to long and cherished political beliefs and traditions. The stronger, more confidently and resolutely Labour leadership expresses itself in such a situation, the more this differentiation will increase, the more people will be attracted to the Labour movement, the stronger its organisation becomes in the factories and localities, so that its whole mass basis is strengthened in such a way as enables it to prevent any distortion of the programme of a People's Government which replaces Chamberlain or any strengthening of Imperialist aims.

The fear on the part of some Labour leaders and their supporters that the Tory opposition to Chamberlain is only making certain manœuvres to defend their class interests at the expense of the working class, is a confession of lack of faith in the working class and its organisations.

Unless such steps as we suggest are taken there will be a growth of the present dangerous feeling of resignation to the inevitability of war; that nothing can now be done to improve

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the social position of the people or fight unemployment. Such feelings breed demoralisation and impotence, they strengthen the position of Chamberlain who has a definite political line—a pro-fascist line. Such feelings can, and must, be dispelled by clear political leadership and unity of action on the part of those opposed to Chamberlain.

The people need to be put on their guard against the very clever attempts that will undoubtedly be made for Chamberlain to manœuvre in such a way as still to deceive sections of the population into believing that he has all the time, in his negotiations with the fascist dictators, only been activated by the desire to prevent war. The peoples fear war so much, that there is always a danger of deceiving them into believing that they have been saved from war, as after Munich, when the actual facts are that they have only been taken a little nearer to war, in more dangerous and isolated circumstances. Under no circumstances can Chamberlain become the custodian of the defence of the British people, either in home or foreign questions. The group he represents will as surely betray Britain as the Fifth Column in Spain have betrayed the Spanish Republic.

As the war crisis grows, the questions of defence are recognised on all sides as ever more urgent. But the first necessity for the real defence of the people is the defeat of the Government of Chamberlain and its support of fascist aggression. Who bears the heaviest responsibility for the foul hot breath of war now fanning the cheeks of millions of people? Undoubtedly it is the Chamberlain Government. An effective policy of defence of the British people requires the defeat of Chamberlain as the essential condition for making any other measure of defence effective.

The main failing and danger of the present policy of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress in relation to defence, is that they approach it as if technical questions of defence could be separated from the political question, and so become involved in these in such a way as to create the impression of complete identification with Chamberlain's policy. This largely arises out of fear of being accused of not wanting Britain to be strong in its defensive forces.

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Chamberlain and the engines of propaganda he controls have not been slow to accuse those who oppose his policy, and who are for collective resistance to fascism, of "wanting war." In this he is seconded by Hitler and Mussolini who have exactly the same line.

In my report to the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party, we stated:

> But where does Chamberlain's policy really lead? He claims that it ensures peace, "that it keeps Britain out of war." Never was there a greater lie, and this great lie must be exposed.
>
> The seven years' record of the National Government shows a steady assistance to the growth of Fascist economic and military power, and an expansion of war all over the world, until now war involves one-fourth of the human race.
>
> Chamberlain, like Baldwin before him, deliberately lies to the British people about the tempestuous rate of Germany's war preparations. He refuses to disclose what he knows of Hitler's strategical plans against France, and about which the Nazis in their military journals speak openly.

Since that was said, Munich and the invasion of Czechoslovakia has occurred. No one dare deny that as a result the whole military and economic basis of German fascism has been strengthened. What is the earthly use of calling for increased armament production in Britain one day, when the next day you hand to Hitler thousands of aeroplanes, tanks, heavy artillery, a defence line that cost £100,000,000 to construct, thousands of conscripts, important war industries like Skodas, vital chemical factories, and create a situation where Hitler is able to remove 25 Divisions of his Army from the Czech frontier to the French, and which allows him to establish Air bases in Spain.

The key to the question of defence, either against poverty or war, is policy. If that policy is strengthening fascism, you are simply betraying the defence of the British people both in regard to social conditions and war. The people realise more and more that concessions given to the fascists only whet their appetite for more. Abyssinia, Saar, Austria, Danzig, Czechoslovakia, Memel, China, Spain—a sequence of betrayals which have struck the words "reason" and "negotiation" out of the language. A series of outrages which represent the darkest pages in modern history. Is it

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surprising that in the minds of millions "whose turn next" looms large? "Can Britain go on betraying every other democratic nation without reaping the inevitable nemesis"; "When shall we feel the rod on our own backs?"

The people of Britain must be made to realise that the attempts to buy immunity by reactionary four-power pacts will never bring peace. If we go on throwing morsels to the wolves whose hunger is insatiable, one day we will be presented with a bill of costs. In order to check the spread of war we must, and without delay, build up an unbreakable common front of the peoples who want peace, strengthen the League of Nations and unite in a common pact for Peace all States which are prepared to maintain peace against fascist aggression. But to do this we must defeat the Chamberlain Government and replace the Munich policy of alliance with the fascist war-makers by standing firmly for a policy of collective maintenance of peace. Only in this way can we ensure a real defence of the people.

Bound up with this same question is how we can best help the people of Germany and Italy in their struggle against fascism. It must be surely clear that the stronger and more united the movement against fascism is in the democratic countries, the greater encouragement there is for the development of the mass movement inside the fascist countries themselves. This is always the Achilles Heel of Fascism. But if the peoples in Britain and France for example, continue to allow their Governments to support fascist aggression, to give away key defensive positions, it is inevitable that a feeling of isolation should develop and the mass movement of the people be damped down inside Germany and Italy.

The coming together of all the Labour and democratic forces in Britain would act as such a stimulus to the anti-fascist movement in fascist countries, as to be worth many aeroplanes, tanks and Army divisions. That is why we repeat that the main issue now before the British people is how to defeat Chamberlain, how to save Britain and its people from having to undergo the horrors that people like us in Spain and China are undergoing.

Let the great Labour movement of Britain, confident of

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its strength and sure of its purpose, co-operate with all opponents of Chamberlain's policy to sweep the miscalled "National" Government out of office and replace it by a Government pledged to the defence of the people, against poverty and war, against attacks on democratic rights and liberties. A Government which would, under the pressure of the mass movement, provide work and wages for all the workers; help the Distressed Areas, the agriculture and fishing industries; extend the social services and schemes of housing and public works; assist the old age pensioners; give the young people a real chance in life, in education, in technical training. A Government that would end profiteering and corruption in the supply of Britain's arms by the nationalisation of the armaments industry; that would restore the political rights of the trades unions, remove bans on free speech and demonstration; that would extend the present democratic rights we have won to the colonial peoples. A Government that would really defend the British people from fascist aggression by joining hands with the people of France, the Soviet Union and the United States of America; that would bring peace to Spain by restoring the international rights of the legal Spanish Government; that would act in concert with other democratic nations in securing the integrity and independence of China.

And now, while fighting and organising to form such a Government, a united Labour movement could be recruiting and strengthening the Labour Party, Trade Unions and Co-operatives; uniting the trades unionists to secure their wage demands; uniting the employed and unemployed, in a common fight against Unemployment; leading the revolt in the countryside; intensifying in every possible way socialist propaganda and education, so that a new impetus is given to the whole movement.

This is the way forward. This is in the interests of the common people, who await such a lead, who want to fight, who will never tolerate the coming of fascism to Britain, if those whose duty it is to lead will really lead. The time is ripe for such forms of action to be taken now. The taking of this action is the essence and test of Labour leadership to-day.

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Germany After Six Years of Hitler

BY TEUTONICUS

Is FASCIST ECONOMY a new form of capitalism? Is it a new stage in the development of capitalism such as is imperialism as compared with 19th century capitalism? Has fascism done away with so many essentials of capitalism that one could conclude: although there are still many capitalist elements left in Germany, society as a whole is no longer capitalistic? These and similar questions have come up again and again, and before speaking about conditions in Fascist Germany it is necessary to attempt an answer to them.

Two things are essential in every capitalist society: first, that the means of production are privately owned while production is social, everybody taking part in the process which secures an increasing number of products to a decreasing number of individual owners of the means of production; second, that the *leitmotiv*, the economic incentive, is the quest for profits.

Fascist Economy in Germany

The first question we have to answer is therefore: do these two characteristics apply to Fascist Germany and her economy? At first glance this does not seem to be the case. How can one say that the quest for profits is the underlying motive for economic action among the ruling class if prices are state-regulated? How can one speak of private ownership of the means of production if the distribution of raw materials is state-regulated, if foreign trade is state-regulated, if a considerable part of the home trade is state-regulated, if crops have to be given up to the state, if the state builds factories and creates the largest iron ore mining undertaking in the country?

But let us recollect the historical development of capitalism. The period of liberal capitalism, of almost purely competitive capitalism, was followed by a period of monopoly capitalism, when finance capital, i.e., combined monopoly industrial capital and monopoly bank capital, has achieved a preponderant position. The taxation system, the customs system, the banking system, the whole system of legislation are changed in such a way as to favour more and more the development of trusts and combines. The economic freedom of the small capitalists is increasingly restricted. If, for instance, electricity prices are fixed so as to be lowest for the consumers of the greatest quantities, if transport rates are lowest for the senders of the greatest quantities or for

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the senders of specific industrial goods, then the economic freedom of the smaller employers or of certain industries is undoubtedly infringed upon. Under monopoly capitalism the non-monopolists are no longer in a position to draw full profits as they did formerly because the monopolies realise super profits at their expense ; non-monopolists have no longer the same freedom to use the means of production, custom duties, for instance, being fixed in such a way as to discriminate against the raw materials which they need, transport charges being fixed in such a way as also to discriminate against them, both being fixed in favour of the monopolies. Full freedom for all capitalists to use the means of production is therefore not an essential feature of capitalism ; it was characteristic of a certain period of capitalism only.

Now let us look at conditions in fascist Germany. True, the distribution of raw materials whether imported or produced at home is regulated by the state. If we study the regulations and the actual distribution of raw materials, we find that one group of capitalists is especially favoured : the armament and semi-armament producers. The iron and steel industry, the pure armament industries, the chemical industry producing in part armaments and in part civilian goods, the building and construction industry, producing in part armaments (barracks, military roads, aeroplane hangars, etc.) and in part civilian goods (dwellings)—these are the favoured industries. If we examine the kinds of commodities which the state regulated imports bring into Germany, we find that they are chiefly commodities needed by the armament industries. If we investigate what kind of factories the state itself erects we find : the state either erects or heavily subsidises factories which produce raw materials either for direct use in the armament industry or for such civilian industries which are dependent upon imported raw materials (the idea being that the saving of imports of raw materials for civilian industries would leave more foreign exchange for imports of armament raw materials).

The gigantic Hermann Goering Werke which produce iron ore represent nothing but a gigantic state subvention for the armament industry. They mine ore of such poor quality that the mining cannot be profitable ; after the ore has been mined and transformed into pig iron the Hermann Goering Werke sell it at the prevailing market price to the armament industry, the difference between market price and costs of production being paid for by the state, that is chiefly by the masses of the people. The new Zellwolle (staple fibre) factories are subsidised by the state as long as they do not return profits. Crops have to be delivered to the state in order to regulate food consumption so as to import as little food and as many armament raw materials as possible. The freedom of many capitalists, even of large capitalists, is infringed in favour of the armament capitalists. Textile trusts are treated almost like an ordinary smaller capitalist enterprise ; the chocolate trusts suffer from labour shortage ; thousands of small

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craftsmen are forced into bankruptcy—and all this is done in order to improve still further the position of the armament industries.

Fascism implies rule of, by, and for the most reactionary part of finance capital ; it implies rule of, by, and for the armament and semi-armament industries. They have first claim on the economic and political machinery and therefore it is peculiarly they who control the state. Before fascism came to power the state served the various interests of the textile trusts, the food trusts, the tobacco trusts as well as the iron and steel trusts, the big banks, the big agrarians, etc. To-day, under fascism, the state is especially the instrument of the most reactionary part of finance capital, of the heavy industries, the armament, the iron and steel, the chemical, the construction trusts.

This most reactionary part of finance capital runs the economic system for its own ends so that not only the masses of the people are exploited and plundered, so that not only the small craftsmen and shopkeepers and the small employers have to pay tribute, but the employers outside the heavy industries also have to submit to a certain clipping of their privileges and contribute part of their profits to the profit collection of the armament industry.

Changes in the Structure of Finance Capital under Fascism

This predominance of one part of finance capital over the whole of economy (including some trusts and monopolies) has brought about certain changes in the character of capitalist society. If the state as instrument of government is mainly at the disposal of the armament industries the rôle of the banks, for instance, becomes of minor importance. Before fascism came into power the banks were in a way the partners of the big industrialists ; to-day, in Germany, the banks have become the cashiers, or even functionaries of still minor importance of the armament industry ; for the state has taken over the business of financing the armament industries, it gives them all the necessary credit facilities and makes the investments considered necessary by the armament industrialists, etc. The freedom of investment, of the disposal of products, of the buying and selling of raw materials is taken away from many employers. In many respects the employers become increasingly officials in a state regulated business. This is true even of employers in the semi-armament industries and in the armament industries themselves. Even Krupp and Thyssen and the other big monopolists could easily be replaced to-day in their business by a state official. And yet capitalism, the profit motive and private ownership of capital, are still effective. For to-day Krupp and Thyssen and their brother monopolists are state-rulers. Their economic basis is still their business enterprise. But their platform is the state. And they rule the state in such a way that their business flourishes. They are motivated by the lust for higher and higher profits, they own the means of production, the use of which is necessary for the extrac-

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tion of surplus value from the workers. But the position of many other employers has changed in certain respects. In many ways they have become functionaries, and nothing more ; they have not become rulers of Germany like Krupp and Thyssen and others. Their freedom as employers has been curtailed, indeed ; just as fifty years ago the freedom of many small employers was curtailed by the big cartels and trusts. In fascist Germany to-day many a trust chairman presiding over a civilian undertaking is in the position of the small employer of fifty years ago : a force, economically considerably stronger than he himself, is reducing his freedom to exploit and plunder, and, in addition, robs him of a considerable part of his profits.

The rise of the armament monopolists to absolute power has led to a two-fold development of monopolisation in general. On the one hand, it has led to a large increase of the holdings of the armament and semi-armament monopolists who have taken over many a firm in the old Reich and who have made large gains by absorbing many Austrian and Sudeten firms. On the other hand, the general process of monopolisation has been stopped. During the first year of fascist rule many new cartels and trusts and monopolies had been formed or were in the process of being formed. They have almost all been dissolved again. And this is quite natural. For the monopolies have the advantage of getting super profits, that is of robbing the other capitalists of part of their profits. The more monopolies exist the more capitalists tend to get super profits and the less extra profits can go to the individual monopolist ; for monopolisation does not create more profits, it only changes their distribution. The fewer the monopolies the higher their super profits. It is understandable, therefore, that late in 1933 the old monopolies began a campaign against this general spread of the monopolisation process, and within a short time they had dissolved the newly-formed trusts and cartels and monopolies.

Fascism and the Crisis

There is one final question of importance which must be dealt with here. If German Fascist economy is still capitalist, does this imply that it is governed also by the law of cyclical crises as developed in Marx's *Capital*, or has this law been modified ? It has not been modified. German fascist economy is also governed by the law of overproduction crises. The crisis of 1929-32 had reached its lowest point already before Hitler came into power. When Hitler moved to the chancellery, production already had risen to 10 per cent. above the lowest point, the official index of sensitive commodity prices had increased already by 20 per cent. and the index of stock exchange prices had even gone up by 30 per cent. Fascist economy had had nothing to do with the beginning of the increase of business activity after the low point of the crisis had been reached.

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But what about the next crisis? How is over-production possible if more and more goods (armament goods) are produced only when ordered. This problem seems at first quite perplexing. But it is easy to solve. Over-production means that while the purchasing power increases the production increases even more, and a crisis develops. This can easily happen also in the growing sphere of armament production where the state orders armaments. If the state gives larger armament orders than it can pay for from revenues, it has to borrow more and more, and if it can no longer borrow enough it has to print the money. Therefore, under fascism the cyclical crisis may begin in a "third sphere,"* the armament sphere, and it may start in another way than under finance capitalism "pure and simple": it may begin as a financial crisis in the form of an inflation, but the underlying cause of the crisis, over-production, remains the same.

Fascist economy is capitalist economy. It is not a new stage of capitalism, it is not a new period following upon that of finance capitalism or imperialism. It is only a special form of finance capitalism, of imperialism. It is evolved and used by a certain section of finance capitalism under certain historical circumstances. To put it briefly, it is an expedient adopted by the ruling class but not a stage in the development of capitalism like imperialism.

* * *

On January 27, 1932, Adolf Hitler addressed a meeting of prominent industrialists and big bankers of Rhineland-Westphalia, the most industrialised province of Germany. The meeting which took place at the Park Hotel in Düsseldorf, one of the most fashionable places in the Rhineland, had been arranged by Fritz Thyssen, the trust magnate, who had become one of the chief backers of the Nazi movement some years before the outbreak of the world economic crisis. On that occasion Hitler made a remarkable speech, the contents of which may be summarised as follows:

> "You industrialists stand for the maintenance of private property, which is an aristocratic principle; but you have not yet made up your minds whether or not you are to oppose democracy. Make no mistake about it: if you do not destroy democracy it will do away with your rights and privileges; for the logical outcome of political equality is equality in the economic sphere, i.e., communism, which has already conquered one-sixth of the earth and is spreading. You must give me political power, for I am the only man who with the help of the Nazi movement can crush democracy and all it stands for, and can restore Germany to that position which she enjoyed before the Great War, nay, to an even stronger one."

The Fascist "Constitution"

This programme met with the whole-hearted approval of German big business and a year later, on January 30, 1933, Hitler was appointed

*The two other spheres are those of civilian capital goods and civilian consumption goods production.

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Reich Chancellor. Although there is no signed and sealed Constitution in Germany to-day (to speak of the fascist " constitution " is perhaps a contradiction in terms) the outstanding features of totalitarianism are very clearly marked in the German political structure and may be described in the following way :

There is an enormous concentration of political power in the hands of the Government or, to put it more precisely, in the hands of the " Leader and Reich Chancellor " who, after the death of Hindenburg, added the functions of President to those of Chancellor. Because of the growing discontent of the generals with his adventurous war plans, Hitler made himself Minister of War at the beginning of 1938 ; in his defence of the murderous purge of June 30, 1934, he announced that he had been the " Chief Justice " of the German people on that very date. It is evident that the man who combines the offices of President, Chancellor, Minister of War, and Chief Justice is simultaneously head of the monopolist Nazi party. There is to-day a distinct inclination in Nazi circles to regard Hitler as a kind of God-Cæsar with practically unlimited powers ; this tendency becomes sometimes manifest in Hitler himself, for instance when he shouted at poor Schuschnigg : " Don't you realise that you are speaking to the greatest German who ever lived ? "

The legislative functions which, in a parliamentary democracy, are performed by the freely-elected representatives of the people have been completely absorbed by the Government. The " Reichstag," or what still passes for such, is very seldom called together and then either to listen to a speech of Hitler's and applaud it enthusiastically or to confirm a measure which had already been decided upon. All the deputies are either Nazis or at least elected on the Nazi list ; during the " election campaigns " there is no legal opposition party which can submit its views to the electorate and canvass for votes. Under these circumstances the outcome of an election or a plebiscite is always a foregone conclusion ; it is moreover secured by methods ranging from the intimidation of individual voters to shameless forgery of election results.

Democracy not only requires that the citizen enjoy the right to participate in the shaping of his country's political life, but that he be protected from arbitrary encroachments upon his life and liberty (inviolability of person and property, privacy of letters and telephone, right to trial). Immediately after Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship the Nazis started to abolish these liberties, and this process was speeded up after the Reichstag fire. The bench was " cleansed " of all judges who were either Jews or held mildly progressive views ; the same measure was adopted with regard to those lawyers who belonged to one of the above categories or were " Marxists." From that time dates the permeation of the Courts by individuals who owe their appointment not to their juridical capacities, but to their Nazi party allegiance. Special Courts were instituted which are exclusively

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composed of steadfast Nazi supporters of the Nazi creed: some of them are jurists, others are officers either of the army or of the Black Guards or Storm Troopers; still others are higher grade party officials. These special tribunals (the "People's Court" is the principal one) have taken away from the Ordinary Courts all major political cases and a lot of others.

The practice of the People's Court may be illustrated by one striking example: from 1929 to 1933 many clashes took place between working people and Nazi gangs who tried to invade the workers' quarters and terrorise the inhabitants; on these occasions many workers and a few Nazis were killed. The People's Court now reopens closed proceedings and decides first, that the workers were always guilty whereas the terrorists exercised the right of self-defence and if killed were murdered; second, that those morally responsible for these "murders" were the leaders of the workers' organisations in the respective district. On this legally monstrous ground Edgar André was condemned to death and executed.

It is a recognised principle in all civilised countries that nobody can be prosecuted and sentenced under a law which was not in force when the alleged crime was committed; this principle was first abandoned in Nazi Germany in the case of the unfortunate van der Lubbe. Later on the Nazis established the rule that an offender who has committed a wrong which is not legally punishable but stands forth condemned by the "sound feeling of the people" is to be punished under a law referring to similar crimes. The last barriers of personal security were swept away by the institution of "protective custody" according to which an individual can be arrested and detained on a warrant now usually issued by the Secret Police. What happens after his arrest is a matter of chance; he may be released after a few hours or imprisoned for life—even killed—in a concentration camp; there is no charge, no legal defence, no prescribed rules of procedure. Finally, there are the numerous cases where the Nazis take the law into their own hands, where people are fetched from their homes, robbed, beaten up, and often murdered while the police and the public prosecutor either remain neutral or assist the assailants. If legal proceedings are instituted, they are against those who try to protect the victims or express their abhorrence. In the 17th century Hobbes foresaw the rise of "Leviathan." The great "Leviathan," the omnipotent State which deprives the individual of his freedom and dignity as a human being, has materialised in the Third Reich.

The End of Trade Unionism

The destruction of democracy involved the attempted destruction of all voluntary organisations (economic, political, cultural, philanthropic, even social). Whenever he deals with the dissolution of the Marxist organisations in the totalitarian State, Hitler never forgets

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to mention that he has dissolved the old bourgeois parties too. There is a notable difference between the destruction of the workers' parties on the one hand and that of the " old bourgeois parties " on the other. *The dissolution of the latter indicates that the capitalists have changed their weapon ; the suppression of the former means that the rising working class has been temporarily deprived of some of its most effective weapons.*

Alongside the attack on the workers' parties developed the onslaught on the trade unions ; here the most important date is May 2, 1933 (the day after the first fascist " May Day."), when the " Free " Trade Unions were taken over by the Nazis. A little later the trade unionists, like many other people, were forced into the newly-formed " German Labour Front," headed by Dr. Ley. The " Labour Front," in its present state,* is a bloated organisation of about 18 million members, including employers as well as employed, professional people and many others. Its main task, as officially laid down, is to further " social peace and to educate the German workers in the true spirit of National Socialism." The membership in the Labour Front is said to be voluntary ; actually it is compulsory as the Labour Courts have more than once decided that withdrawal from the Labour Front or refusal to join it is a sufficient reason for dismissal without notice. Dr. Ley himself has emphatically stated : " We hope and believe that no one will find work in Germany who is not a member of the Labour Front."

The major portion of the dues which the Labour Front extracts from its members is spent on the maintenance of a bureaucracy which is both vast and corrupt, and on the financing of " work creation schemes," i.e., on investment in armament shares and armament loans. Fascist elements in the democratic countries like to assert that there is " 100 per cent. trade unionism " in the totalitarian states. The answer to that is simple : there is no trade unionism at all. The Labour Front, on account of its origin, composition, leadership, and guiding principles is as unable as it is unwilling to fulfil a single one of those functions which are performed by an independent trade union in a democracy. If some officials of the Labour Front have interfered in the interest of the workers with the management of certain factories, they did so in defiance of the rules of their own organisation and under pressure from below exercised by workers who utilise for their own ends the fascist mass organisations.

The Introduction of Serfdom

The state of serfdom to which Nazism wants to reduce the wage earners is most clearly defined in the basic " Law for the regulation of National Labour " (issued on January 20, 1934). This law sets

*More details about the position of the German workers in general and the Labour Front in particular are contained in the still topical pamphlet, *Fascism—Fight It Now* (Labour Research Department, January, 1937). The reader may also refer to " The Spirit and the Structure of the German Labour Front " in *Germany To-day*, July, 1938, p. 4.

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down the relationship between employer and employed as that between "leader" and "followers" wherein the benevolence and foresight of the former is to be met by the obedience and gratitude of the latter. In this connection we recall that those coal, iron and steel magnates who stand behind the dictatorship from which they reap the benefits, always wanted to be "master in their own house." Now they have become "leaders" of their factories.

The totalitarian state leads to a new serfdom for the worker ; this is clearly shown by the growing restrictions on his freedom of movement. He is not allowed to leave his place of work in order to accept a better paid job ; by doing so he shows "criminal selfishness" and makes himself liable to a fine or term of imprisonment. The Nazis have introduced a labour passport (*Arbeitsbuch*) which must be kept by all workers, employees, clerks, etc., who earn less than Rm. 8,000 (£650) a year (so that only the highest paid categories are exempted).*

In keeping with the above tendencies is the institution of compulsory labour. This, thinly disguised, has already operated since the early days of the dictatorship, for the means test is applied more strictly than ever and a typist, e.g., who refuses to become a farm hand on the advice of the Labour Office is struck off the list of unemployed and deprived of her relief. The transformation of voluntary into compulsory labour service (which was promulgated together with the re-introduction of conscription in March, 1935) provided the legal basis for compelling the youth of both sexes to cultivate land, drain swamps, help in the building of strategic roads and fortifications. Last year the system of compulsory labour was further extended ; on June 22nd, 1938, Goering, who is in charge of the Four-Year Plan, issued a decree, the first paragraph of which reads as follows : "For a fixed period, every German,† either man or woman, is bound to serve at that place to which he (she) is allotted or to undergo special vocational training." On the strength of this decree, tens of thousands of German workers were torn from their homes and drafted to the frontier regions, particularly in Western Germany, where the building of the Siegfried line was hurried on at top speed to enable Hitler to pretend that he could invade Czechoslovakia without having to fear an attack in the West.

With the outbreak of war the last distinctions between conscript soldier and conscript worker will be completely wiped out.‡ The workers will be put under martial law, they will get their meals and, if possible, will be housed in the factories to which they are assigned ;

*Civil servants and party officials are exempted irrespective of the amount of their salary.

†It is remarkable that the decree refers to "every German subject" (deutsche Staatsangehörige) instead of to "every German citizen" (deutsche Reichsbürger). This has been done so as not to exclude the Jews from the army of conscript labourers. Those Jews who are already engaged in building roads, etc., are usually inmates of concentration camps.

‡See the instructive examples in *Germany To-day*, November, 1938, p. 6.

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the Nazis are zealously preparing the ground for the abolition of wages and their replacement by a sort of soldier's pay. " Stay-at-homes," so runs the demagogic slogan, " must not be allowed to earn more than the soldier in the trenches."

Labour Conditions

The problem arises: how has the enslavement of the workers in the Third Reich affected their labour conditions ? In order to understand the changes in labour conditions we must realise that the Nazis have placed Germany's economic life on a war footing. This is the predominant factor. The increase in the total income of German wage-earners since 1933 is mainly due (1) to the reduction of unemployment owing to the boom in the armament industries ; (2) to the lengthening of working hours in the same industries ; (3) to the transfer of workers from the lower-paid consumption goods industries to the relatively higher paid armament industries (without any raising of wages in individual industries).

This upward tendency is to some extent counter-balanced as follows:

(1) Time-rates of wages have slightly decreased.

(2) Prices have gone up and for some commodities the quality has deteriorated, or they are only available in very small quantities, or sometimes not at all. This is first and foremost a result of the restrictions which, in the interest of the armament industries, have been placed on the import of foodstuffs, fodder, and raw materials for the consumption goods industries.

(3) The difference between gross wages and net wages has increased owing to the growth of compulsory deductions for various purposes, such as, e.g., Winter Help, Strength through Joy, Air Raid Precautions, dues for membership in Nazi organisations, subscriptions to Nazi papers and journals, etc.

(4) Labour has been intensified and is likely to undergo a further intensification in the future. This means that the worker needs more and better food in order to restore his working power

(5) The working day has been further lengthened.

According to the most accurate statistics now at hand* the following conclusions on the wage position are justified: for the same number of working hours as in 1933 a worker has since then suffered a reduction of his earnings by about 13 per cent. ; only those who were unemployed in 1932 and who have again become full time workers have experienced any real improvement in their earnings. As unemployment had practically disappeared in 1937 any improvement in the standard of life of the workers can only be achieved by a rise in the wage level ; but in Nazi Germany the major part of the productive forces is devoted to the equipment and strengthening of the army, and

*See P. Forster, Studien zur wirtschaftlichen Lage der Bevölkerung in Deutschland. In *Zeitschrift für freie deutsche Forschung*. Vol. 1 (1938), p. 85.

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the manufacture of consumption goods, essential complement of wages, is restricted. *So we observe the strange phenomenon—for the first time in the history of modern capitalism—that, in the Nazi State, a trade boom is accompanied by falling wages.*

Disintegration at Home—Expansion Abroad

It is a race against time. In a country like Germany with so strong a working class and so old a labour movement the Nazis could not hope to keep the reins of government exclusively by means of terror and propaganda. They had to do something spectacular ; and this was the reduction of unemployment through an artificial boom in the war industries. The process of rearmament, in its turn, brings the public finances to the verge of a second inflation, undermines the once flourishing foreign trade, sharpens all internal contradictions and leads to the possibility of an alliance of all peace-abiding countries against Europe's principal aggressor state. The same force which drove the Nazis forward to rearmament, the re-introduction of conscription, the re-occupation of the Rhineland, intervention in Spain, the rape of Austria, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia will force them to use the sword which they have been so eagerly forging since 1933 in order to bring about a redistribution of the world markets in favour of German imperialism. *The rulers of the Third Reich want Germany to become a second Great Britain—this is the ultimate goal and its attainment would be the final victory.*

The Peasants' Problems

It is a well-established fact that the vast majority of those who flocked to the Nazi party between 1929 and 1933 were not workers but peasants, petty bourgeois, employees, students, dismissed officers, etc. What has happened to these people since the setting up of the dictatorship ? It may be conceded that some of them (young, energetic, ruthless men) climbed up the social ladder by joining the army or by being admitted to the vast bureaucracy of the state or the party ; but the bulk of these classes are now worse off than ever before. In order to show this we will first glance at conditions among the peasants.

The middle and upper peasants in Germany had under a law passed in September, 1933, got their holdings transformed into " entailed farms " ; these can no longer be divided up, sold, mortgaged, put up for auction, etc. The farmer had to pay a price for this relative security ; he can no longer raise a mortgage or get credits on his farm. For this reason many of them have become completely unenterprising while others try to obtain credits in the only way still open to them : by mortgaging their crop and their cattle. It goes without saying that it is very uneconomic to finance long-term investments (improvements, etc.) with expensive short-term credits. Furthermore, the law provides that the " entailed farm " passes on undivided to the nearest male

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heir of the present holder whose younger sons and daughters are thereby proletarianised to the advantage of the privileged successor. According to the census of June 16, 1933, there were in Germany 3.05 million farms of 0.5 hectares (1¼ acres) and over ; since the introduction of the entailment law, 700,000 farms have been brought into the entailed category.

Many medium and the small peasants on the other hand can still be driven from their homesteads and this happens frequently, as the statistics of forced sales prove. The impoverishment of these groups is brought about in a number of ways of which we enumerate only the most important. In Germany, as in other capitalist countries, a division of work between the larger and smaller farmer had taken place, the former concentrating on the production of grain (rye and wheat), potatoes and sugar beet, whereas the latter chiefly went in for cattle, butter, milk, eggs and vegetables. Owing to the continuous pauperisation of the German people the balance of the food market is all in favour of the large farmer who produces necessities as against the small peasant who produces the relatively more expensive foodstuffs.

This development is accentuated by the restrictions on the import of fodder. For a time the peasants managed to replace imported by home-grown fodder. But because of the reduction in the actual acreage under cultivation, and as a result of several poor harvests, there was a shortage of wheat, rye and even potatoes, and it is now strictly forbidden to use them for fodder. First the peasant was deprived of foreign, then of home-produced feeding-stuffs ; he is therefore compelled to slaughter his most valuable asset, his livestock. The shortage of eggs, butter, cheese, milk and meat, from which the urban consumers as well as the peasants suffer is not an accident but one of the logical results of the Nazi war economy. The taxes which the peasant has to pay are higher than ever and are collected with a ruthlessness hitherto unattained ; in all his economic dealings the farmer is subjected to the most meticulous supervision by the officials of the " Reichsnährstand " (the organisation of the agriculturalists) and the agents of the Gestapo. The Nazi war preparations necessitate the transformation of formerly cultivated land into fortifications, subterranean hangars, aerodromes, barracks, strategic roads, no man's land around armament factories, etc. For these purposes the land required now amounts to about 1,730,000 acres (the size of the province of Thuringia) and it is usually taken from the poor peasants instead of from the large landowners or the entailed farmers.

The " Small Man," the Intellectuals and the Church

Let us now look at the " small man " in the Nazi paradise. No matter whether it is Mosley in England, de la Rocque and Doriot in France, Degrelle in Belgium—they are all " saviours " of the small man who is being ground between the upper and the nether millstones

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of high taxation, high costs of production, lack of credit facilities on the one hand and poverty of his customers (employees and workers) on the other. Instead of lightening this burden the Nazis made it much heavier and added to it the shortage of raw materials and foodstuffs which spells ruin to the handicraftsman, the shopkeeper, and the publican.

Sometime ago Dr. Ponse, head of the Nazi organisation for German handicraftsmen, stated that there were about 700,000 one-man workshops ; of these between 500,000 and 600,000 earned less than enough to live on and from time to time had to apply for poor relief. " The question arises whether it is not better to take away his shadow independence and transfer the handicraftsman where skilled men are needed . . . naturally these one-man businessmen would later have to be re-instated." This is the vicious circle ; the Nazi war economy produces crisis in the public finances and foreign trade on the one hand, and the desire for skilled workers on the other. So the small man is first crushed by taxation, lack of raw materials, etc., and subsequently drafted into the armament industries as a conscript worker. The Nazis promised the small man to protect him from expropriation by the Conmmuists, and they kept their word in their own way since they expropriated him themselves.

It is the same with the intellectuals. The doctor, the lawyer, the writer, the artist, the journalist, the teacher, the scholar—all are oppressed by the growing militarism, the dominance of the armed forces and their requirements over all other spheres of public life. These people also suffer particular hardships from the common fate : they are deprived of the liberty of thought and are forced to profess doctrines, which—like the racial twaddle—do not stand the test of objective examination.

It follows that there is a growing discontent, not only among the workers but also among the petty bourgeois, the intellectuals, the middle-class. Up to now this dissatisfaction found a quasi-legal expression in the Church struggle. We do not mean that the followers of the Churches are exclusively non-proletarian. The Catholic Church was always deeply rooted among the Catholic workers and there are marked signs to-day that Protestant workers who, prior to the establishment of the Nazi régime, had turned their backs on the Church have now changed their minds because of the possibilities of opposition, offered by some sections of the " Professional " Church. The citizen of a democratic country is often at a loss to understand what it means if in a totalitarian state doctrines are preached from the pulpit which are non-Nazi in origin and become anti-Nazi if they are consistently pursued and critically applied to the present situation.

The Fight of the Workers

Nevertheless, it is a fact that the Church Struggle is of a

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more bourgeois than proletarian character and that the rallying-point of the German opposition is and remains the working class. The proletarian opposition to the dictatorship is embodied in two different forms: in the existence of small groups on strictly conspirative lines and in the application of the tactic of the "Trojan horse," i.e., the utilisation of the Fascist mass-organisations for anti-fascist purposes. This can be done if and when the workers insist on the putting into practice of the demagogic slogans and catchwords of the Nazis ("Honour the hand hardened by toil," "To every worker his livelihood," "A fair wage for all"). If the workers are successful they reap the benefit from the material as well as from the moral point of view; if for the moment they are defeated the Nazi rank-and-filers and the lower functionaries of the Nazi hierarchy are taught the lesson that the promises of their party are not meant honestly and that every serious attempt at their realisation brings *all* workers (whether Nazis or not) into conflict with the higher Nazi officials and the "Leader of the factory," i.e., the employer backed by the Nazis. Moreover, anti-fascists (of course, not publicly known as such) try to get into official positions in the Nazi organisations, to become "Confidential Councillors," Block-wardens, House-wardens, etc. In spite of all misrepresentations this type of work is urgently needed as it provides the anti-fascists with the opportunity to remain in constant contact with the broad masses of the German people, who are to-day willy-nilly organised on Nazi lines.

The People's Front

The most conscious and courageous fighters against the dictatorship set themselves the task of combining the numerous opposition trends and movements in a broad people's front aiming at the overthrowing of the Hitler régime. The German people's front would insist on the following three demands:

(1) *Economic prosperity and security*—as against the impoverishment of the people by Hitler's war preparations;

(2) *Freedom*—against tyranny.

(3) *Peace*—as against a policy which, if unchecked, is bound to lead the German as well as all other peoples into the catastrophe of a second world war.

These three demands are obviously inter-related, and they are broad enough to serve as a common platform for all the opposition groups.

Nevertheless, it is naturally enormously difficult to build up a people's front in Germany to-day. The terror and the fear of terror make themselves very strongly felt. There are people who are not Nazis, who among friends even confess to being anti-Nazis but who are so infected with Nazi propaganda that they have lost their faculty for independent judgment. Others are disillusioned and weary of politics; they observe that the Nazi chief is visited by kings, princes

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and statesmen of many countries, that the Prime Minister of the largest Empire in the world comes twice to accept his ultimatums and helps force them on a small gallant nation ; they conclude that Hitler will always get away with his aggressive designs and that resistance to the dictatorship is a heroic but hopeless undertaking.

Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that there was no United Front and People's Front in Germany before the establishment of the Nazi régime. (The main reason, of course, why it was established.) The social democratic leadership turned down all offers for a united front which were made by the Communists, and they still persist in this negative attitude. There are to-day numerous united front activities in German factories and workshops, but the Social Democratic workers who take part in them do so in defiance of the will of their leaders ; and in view of the very great loyalty with which the average German worker sticks to his organisation, the hostility of the Social Democratic leaders is bound to be a very grave obstacle to a working-class united front and a people's front.

Despite all this the situation has greatly changed during the past year. During the first period of the dictatorship many Social Democrats, Democrats, Christians and Jews looked upon it as a storm which must subside before one could come into the open again. This illusion faded away when the war-clouds were gathering closer. To-day many more realise that those who will not fight and suffer for their own cause will be forced to do so for the sake of the Nazis.

At the time of the war scare, in August and September, 1938, the artificial barriers between the individual opposition groups were swept aside and in the streets and workshops, on the tramcars and the houses of the people a spontaneous people's front sprang into being. People who hitherto had hardly dared to express their opinions in the privacy of the family circle, behind closed doors, suddenly spoke openly to strangers, and all these conversations centred on two points : fear of war and hatred of the Nazi war-makers. This German people's front was not yet strong enough to prevent the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia but next time may it be strong enough to scotch Hitler's aggressive designs.

The events since Munich—the war threats uttered by Hitler at Erfurt, Saarbrücken and Munich, the acceleration of war preparations, the new burdens imposed on the German people, the utter barbarism of the Jewish pogrom—are not such as to make the Nazis recover the ground lost. And there are Germans at work who everyday stake their lives in order to transform the incoherent opposition into a consistent and coherent opposition, into a solid people's front. When this aim is achieved the Nazi tyranny will be overthrown and replaced by the democratic people's republic of Germany, to the immeasurable advantage of the German as well as of all other nations.

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The Revolt of the Farmers

BY MAURICE CORNFORTH

THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY of Britain, especially in the Eastern Counties, is in the grip of economic crisis. Farmers all over the country are up in arms ; one of the most conservative sections of the population is in revolt against the National Government. This article will attempt to analyse the character of the present agricultural crisis ; the political moves now being made by the farmers' organisations ; and the policy which the Labour Movement should follow. We shall try and show that the difficulties of the farmers are caused by the policy of monopoly capitalism and the National Government. The big monopoly and finance interests which are undermining the position of the farmers, are the same interests that condemn the farmworkers to poverty, and are destroying the standards of life and social security of the British people as a whole. The way forward for the farmers is therefore in unity with the working class and popular forces.

The Agricultural Crisis

The agricultural crisis is a crisis of *prices*, which have fallen below production costs. Two commodities especially are affected—barley and sheep. It is estimated that there has been a loss of about £2 per acre on this year's barley crop. This collapse of barley prices is fatal—not just for barley—but for the whole organisation of arable farming, since barley is an essential factor in the rotation system.

The crisis can be laid at the door of the National Government's policy, or lack of policy. The Government have no comprehensive policy for agriculture. They have simply proceeded along the lines of subsidising particular commodities. The recent assistance offered to barley growers resulted in an increase in the acreage of barley. At the same time, imports of barley were greatly increased. This naturally resulted in a "glut," and consequent losses to home barley growers. The brewers, who are the main buyers, bought up the cheaper imported barley, and the home product was sold off at ruinous prices. While the farmers have lost, the brewers are enjoying greatly increased profits.

While prices of barley and sheep have fallen below production costs, it is true in general of agricultural products that the prices are not satisfactory to the producers. But at the same time big money is being made out of agriculture. It is being made by manufacturers of fertilisers and feedstuffs, by the Sugar Beet Corporation, by the big

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millers, by the brewers, by the big dairies. The problem is to organise production and marketing so that a bigger share goes to the producers.

For this reason we are in agreement with the farmers' movement, when they demand immediate economic assistance, and a long term policy to give security to agricultural producers. It will only be possible for the farmers to secure a permanent measure of prosperity through the fight against the National Government and the big combines. Only a weakening of the power of big business, and at the same time an improvement in the standard of nutrition of the masses (resulting in an increased market for food products), can in the long run save the farmers. Hence their interests now harmonise with those of the farm workers, and of the mass of the consuming public, and are in conflict with the aims of the National Government and monopoly capitalism.

The Political Campaign of the Farmers' Union

In the light of this conclusion we have to define our attitude towards the present political moves of the National Farmers' Union.

Two points must be understood at the outset. First, it was inevitable that the farmers' movement should very quickly take on a directly political character. They are in a position where they have to fight for Government assistance and new agricultural legislation. Hence they must organise politically to bring pressure to bear on the existing Government, and to secure the return to Parliament of representatives who will really uphold rural interests.

But in the second place, before unity can be achieved amongst agricultural producers, the prejudices and antagonisms of generations have to be overcome. For farmers and farmworkers, the farmers' organisations and the Labour Movement, have been at one another's throats for generations. Farmers have consistently fought against any improvement in the workers' wages and standards of life ; and the workers' organisations in the countryside have grown up out of struggle against the farmers. It is only to be expected, therefore, that there should be great resistance from the workers' side to any common front with the farmers, and that the farmers' organisations for their part should cling to their past traditions of upholding Toryism and reaction.

Following a campaign of protest meetings about the barley and sheep crisis, the National Farmers' Union is now entering the electoral field with a policy of farmers' candidates. The first try-out of this policy is taking place in the East Norfolk By-Election, where Mr. J. F. Wright secretary of the Norfolk Farmers' Union, is opposing both the official National Government candidate and the Labour candidate.

The first reaction of many Labour supporters to this N.F.U. intervention has been to welcome it, because it splits the reactionary vote and so gives the Labour candidate a better chance of getting returned.

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Such an estimation of Mr. Wright's candidature (and similar candidatures are threatened in other constituencies as well) is, however, very short-sighted and mistaken. It is the ultra-Conservative semi-fascist section amongst the big farmers who dominate the N.F.U. who are responsible for this electoral policy. They have no intention of helping to defeat the National Government. On the contrary, their electoral policy is aimed precisely *at preventing any union of the farmers with the Labour and democratic forces*, and so assisting the National Government.

Mr. Wright is opposing the official National Government candidate in East Norfolk, but Mr. Wright is not an anti-Chamberlain candidate. He declares his complete support for Chamberlain's foreign policy, and for Chamberlain's domestic policy in every item save agriculture. Forgetful of Chamberlain's Kettering speech last summer, in which the Prime Minister definitely stated his point-blank refusal to help agriculture, Mr. Wright and his friends seem to be suggesting that the plight of agriculture is in no way Chamberlain's fault, but that he has rather been led astray by false advisers. The whole of Mr. Wright's campaign, therefore, is aimed at preserving the farmers' support for Chamberlain, while at the same time pressing for concessions from the Government towards agriculture.

It is clear, therefore, that the *agricultural* opposition which is growing up in the Conservative ranks is at present quite unconnected with and contradictory to the main Conservative opposition centred around such figures as Mr. Eden. While Mr. Eden and his friends play a progressive rôle in fighting Chamberlain's foreign policy, Mr. Wright and the dissident farmers play so far a reactionary rôle, loudly supporting Chamberlain on every major issue of foreign and home policy with the solitary exception of the agricultural issue.

The attitude of the N.F.U. in the East Norfolk election is a completely inconsistent attitude. (1) The agricultural policy of the National Government cannot be separated from the rest of its home and foreign policy—a policy dictated by the big combines and monopolies, by finance capital, against the workers, against the mass of the people, against the small producers, including the farmers. (2) Chamberlain's foreign policy, which gives away position after position to the fascist aggressors, threatens to leave the farms of England, no less than the cities, defenceless against eventual fascist attack. The N.F.U. never tires of pointing out that the continued decline of agriculture may lead to starvation in the event of war ; they do not yet realise that, not only in agriculture, but all along the line, Chamberlain's policy is sapping the defences of the British people. (3) Chamberlain's domestic policy, which the N.F.U. supports, is impoverishing the British people, and therefore destroying the only market which the farmers have for their produce. It is clear, therefore, that in reality not merely the agricultural policy, but the whole policy of the National Government,

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is directly contrary to the interests of the farming community.

The Government and the Farmers

Meantime there are indications that the Government may make some concessions to the farmers' agitation. The Cabinet has promised to reconsider the whole question of agricultural policy, and the Minister of Agriculture is studying the N.F.U. proposals and meeting leaders of the N.F.U. The Government will certainly *not* embark on a long-term policy for agriculture which will bring prosperity to the mass of farmers and farmworkers. But in view of the fall in prices, it is possible they may grant some additional subsidies in the hopes of " appeasing " and buying off the farmers, or at least an influential section of the big farmers.

A subsidy policy, however, cannot give anything but very temporary relief to agriculture, and is likely to be a source of increased trouble in the future. Certain branches of agriculture would be temporarily stimulated, with the inevitable result of eventual over-production and fresh crisis. The granting of additional " protection " to home farming, in the form of a reduction of imports, would penalise the consumer by raising prices, thus causing a falling-off of demand, and making the eventual collapse only more certain. Hence any concessions which the Government may give are likely to provide present relief only at the cost of future disaster.

However, should such concessions be offered, then it is very possible that some of the present " rebels "—who even now support Chamberlain 99 per cent.—will accord him their 100 per cent. support, and will try to mobilise their followers behind the Chamberlain candidates at a future election, although they are favouring " independent " candidates at the present moment.

It is clear, therefore, that a fight must be waged between the Labour and progressive movement and the Chamberlainites, for the support of the mass of the farmers and of the country people. Who wins that fight is one of the factors which will prove decisive for the future of this country.

The Labour Movement and the Farmers

The agricultural crisis gives the Labour Movement perhaps the greatest opportunity for building up its strength in the countryside that it has ever had. By a strong campaign of Trade Union organisation, of exposure of the National Government, and clearly putting forward an alternative policy, the Labour Movement could make greater headway in the countryside than ever before. When we speak of a Labour campaign in the countryside, it is not only a campaign around agricultural issues that is in question. It is clear enough that a campaign of enlightenment on foreign policy is urgently necessary.

The Labour Movement, however, has so far almost completely

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failed to take advantage of these opportunities. During the height of the barley crisis, for instance, the Labour Movement remained, on the whole, silent. In the debate on agriculture which then took place in the House of Commons it was left to a group of the Norfolk Conservative M.P.'s (one and all staunch supporters of Chamberlain) to push themselves forward as the champions of the farmers, while the Labour Party spokesman, Mr. Tom Johnson, confined himself mainly to an abstract lecture on the nationalisation of the land. The farmers therefore received no impression that Labour could become their champions in their desperate plight. They were thrown back on to the line of hoping that Chamberlain of all people would come to their rescue. This attitude was typified in the telegram sent by Oxfordshire farmers to the Prime Minister—" You saved the peace. Now save agriculture ! " The resolutions passed in several counties of refusal to support Government candidates unless a new agricultural policy is initiated, do not yet indicate any purpose of supporting Labour or opposition candidates.

Of key importance is the question of policy. In the light of the events of the agricultural crisis, the general programme of the Labour Party is not enough. The Labour Party stands for " nationalisation of the land," " guaranteed prices for all farm produce," " import boards," " a better organisation of marketing," and, on the basis of all this, improvements in the wages and standards of life of the rural workers. Labour's Immediate Programme for the Land served its purpose very well a year ago, and gave a clear enough indication of the general lines along which agricultural reform ought to proceed. But a year ago agriculture was only in a state of chronic decline, now there is an acute crisis. Thousands of farmers are asking, not merely : " What can be done to stop the decline ? " but : " How am I going to sell my 1938 crop ? " " How will the wages be paid ? " " Can I avoid bankruptcy ? " Labour's general programme does not give a sufficiently precise answer to such questions. We must indicate how Labour's programme would be worked out in immediate practical measures.

The Agricultural Policy of the Farmers' Union

We have also to take into account the immediate policy which the National Farmers' Union itself has recently advanced. The N.F.U. produced a general policy in September, which now serves as the basis of their demands upon the Government. It was significant incidentally that, despite the farmers' acute difficulties, the September policy statement not only made no suggestion to cut costs by reducing *wages*, but on the contrary asserted that land workers' standards ought to be improved—a very unusual statement from an employers' organisation in time of economic crisis. This changed attitude of the farmers towards wages reflects their recognition that the disastrous drift of labour away from the land can only be stopped by offering the farmworker as good prospects on the farm as are held out to him in town employment.

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The farmers, however, have always contended that workers' standards can only be improved if the farmer himself gets a better deal. And they have put forward two main remedies for the difficulties of farmers:—

(1) Prices Insurance, *i.e.*, a Government guarantee fixing a certain relation between prices and costs of production.

(2) Control of Imports.

It will be seen at once that this policy is in general accord with parts of the Labour Party's policy.

But this N.F.U. policy is extremely general and vague. Some form of price insurance or guaranteed prices is essential if agriculture is to be saved. But how would it be worked? The same applies to control of imports. Both these demands, in themselves just and necessary, are capable of a very reactionary interpretation. For instance, it would be quite possible to bolster up farmers' prices by further subsidies, at the same time restricting imports, leaving the profiteering of the big combines untouched, and making the consumers pay for all this through organised scarcity and increased retail prices. To some extent that is what the National Government has done already; and the danger is that the farmers' agitation may lead to a reactionary outcome, and drive them further along the same path. That is what we want to avoid. And the way to avoid it is to build connections between the farmers' movement and the political opposition, especially the Labour Movement; and to clarify and amplify our own policy, showing how better prices could be paid and imports could be controlled *in the interests of the people*, and at the expense of the big combines, not at the expense of the consuming public. As has been pointed out already, the only hope for agriculture is in a people's policy. A reactionary policy of new subsidies and restrictions of imports may perhaps afford temporary relief, but will make an ever worse crisis inevitable in the future. This is what we have to try to make clear to the farmers.

Conclusions

The details of agricultural policy will have to be dealt with in a future article. But the following general conclusions can be drawn, as principles which should guide the progressive movement in its approach to the immediate problems of the countryside:—

(1) A new clarification of agricultural policy is needed, to meet the conditions of the crisis.

(2) The Labour Movement should initiate a big rural campaign, aimed at strengthening the organisation of the rural workers, and putting forward a clear and concrete immediate policy for the land. In and out of Parliament the Labour Movement should do its utmost to support the legitimate demands of the farmers, and to build up unity with the farmers' movement.

(3) Such Parliamentary candidatures as that of Mr. Wright in East

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Norfolk, where a farmers' candidate supports the National Government and maintains a dubious independence only on agricultural questions, should be strenuously opposed, and exposed as political manœuvres which can only isolate the farmers from the mass of the people, and cannot lay the political foundations for a revival of the agricultural industry.

(4) We should work for the building of unity in every rural constituency behind one anti-Chamberlain candidate, who will stand for a progressive policy for agriculture and for every other issue of home and foreign policy ; and we should endeavour to win the support of influential sections of the farmers' movement for this policy, as being the only means to secure the return of a Government that can be trusted to uphold the interests of the countryside.

* * * *

[Since the above was written, the N.F.U. attempt to intervene in the East Norfolk by-election has collapsed. Extreme pressure was brought to bear upon Mr. Wright by Government circles. King George VI. came down and spent a day with Captain Cater, Chairman of the local Conservative Association, and Mr. Wright's chief sponsor ; and after the King had gone home again, Captain Cater brought his influence to bear also to persuade Mr. Wright to withdraw. So Mr. Wright withdrew " in the interests of national unity." Chamberlain for his part sent a letter promising to do something to help agriculture. Hence the return of the prodigal to the bosom of the Government happened rather sooner than was expected at the time the above article was written.

But while Mr. Wright has (rather grudgingly, it is true) declared himself satisfied, the majority of the farmers remain very far from satisfied. Leading Suffolk farmers declared openly that they did not trust Chamberlain's promises. And the Suffolk Branch of the N.F.U. proceeded to throw its whole weight into the organisation of a farmers' protest march in London. This march had previously come under suspicion of being a fascist manœuvre, but the Suffolk farmers openly declared themselves in favour of unity with the working-class organisations, and rejected the overtures of the fascists.

The collapse of Mr. Wright's campaign shows that the farmers can expect nothing by putting their trust in supporters of the National Government. You cannot support the Government on foreign affairs and hope to oppose it on agriculture. This is the lesson which we must help the farmers' movement to learn. Influential sections of the farmers are already prepared to co-operate with the Labour Movement. Everything should be done to achieve such co-operation, for in it lies the possibility of the salvation of home agriculture, and the defeat of the National Government in the rural areas.]

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Let Capital Clear the Lines

BY J. H. HOPE

THE RAILWAY COMPANIES have made it almost impossible for anyone not to know that they are asking for " a square deal." All the resources of advertising have been called upon—free pamphlets, press advertisements, posters. They proclaim their object at every railway station and from every delivery van. " Dare we let the railways die ? " starts out from the advertisement columns of nearly every newspaper.

Taking the companies' views of their position at their face value, it might be imagined that they are approaching bankruptcy, but their actual position is very different.

> Unlike the American railroads, the majority of which are within measurable distance of bankruptcy, the British railways are still earning a substantial net profit (*Evening Standard*, August 23, 1938).

Under the Railways Act of 1921, however, when the present four main line companies were set up, it was laid down that a " fair return " on the railway capital of £1,200,000,000 was an annual net revenue of £51,000,000, the so-called " standard revenue." This figure was based on 1913, when traffic was particularly good, and has never been reached since. But as long as revenue falls short of it the companies argue as though they were faced with bankruptcy. Their pamphlet, *Clear the Lines*, speaks in terms of the alternatives of loss of efficiency or dependence on government subsidies unless something is done to relieve their position.

> It took the railways ten years—1928-1937—to earn seven years' income (*Clear the Lines*, p. 9).

which is their way of saying that their average income has been about £35,000,000 a year. In 1937 net revenue was £38,700,000, and the average rate of interest and dividend paid was 3.43 per cent. of capital. Certainly the prospects for 1938 are not so good. Traffic receipts continued to rise compared with 1937 until about March, when they began to fall. The total for the whole year is about £7,000,000 below 1937. Even so it is most unlikely that net revenue will be less than £26,000,000. Considered absolutely instead of in relation to railway capital and the standard revenue this figure hardly suggests immediate bankruptcy. " Unless the British railways are given the chance to be self-supporting," says their pamphlet. Here is the usual confusion of words. The " British railways " and the shareholders are identified. Visions are conjured up of grass-grown tracks and derelict rolling

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stock, whereas "self-supporting" really means "supporting the shareholders."

The present campaign is yet another attempt to make up the deficiency between actual and standard revenue. The companies cannot be accused of not making efforts to reach this figure. Rationalisation and speed-up measures have been proceeding for years with the usual results on the workers in the industry. Alternative services have been cut out by "pooling," and depôts have been closed in many centres. By careful study of the statistics showing the performances of different types of locomotive, the number in use has been progressively reduced at the same time as the total engine mileage has increased.

	1935	1936	1937
No. of locomotives ..	20,346	20,016	19,881
Total engine mileage	566,052,280	584,796,352	597,821,000

Automatic signalling has been widely introduced and signal boxes scrapped. In all departments men have been made redundant in their own grade and either have to do the work of a lower grade or are transferred to another part of the country with attendant hardship and expense. Among clerks the higher classes have progressively fewer vacancies open with consequent stagnation in the lower classes. These are the conditions to which the *Economist* (March 19, 1938) refers:

> After ten years of cuts and rigid economy, a railway staff would be more than human if it did not reveal the effects, consciously or unconsciously, of blocked promotion and small "rises."

All these measures have meant more work for fewer men, and the staff returns of the Ministry of Transport show this clearly. The number employed has fallen from a total of 656,530 in March, 1930 to 607,278 in 1938. Comparing 1930 and 1937, when the volume of traffic was about the same, there was a fall of 8½ per cent. in the number of staff employed. There has also been a shift towards the employment of women and juniors.

	Male		Female	
	Adults	*Juniors*	*Adults*	*Juniors*
March, 1930	595,264	37,460	21,833	1,320
March, 1938	542,232	39,658	23,039	2,349

But besides this the companies have taken other steps that have been aimed at their own enrichment at the expense of the general public. In 1937 they secured relief from the obligation to pay rates, which meant a lower income for local authorities, falling more severely on the poorer areas which are the ones containing railway property. It also meant a present of about £12,000,000 for the railway companies, as the decision was made restrospective to 1931. Again, on October 1, 1937, all charges were raised by 5 per cent. to cover the extra cost of wages and materials. The London traffic area was excluded at that time, but has now been brought into line. All sections of the public have thus been made to contribute their share towards "standard revenue."

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Now the companies are attacking road transport as the cause of their plight. They are asking:

> that restrictions inherited from the past, such as the cumbersome classification of goods, the publication of all their rates, and the provisions about undue preference should be repealed. This is necessary to enable them to run their business on equal terms with other forms of transport (*Clear the Lines*, p. 11).

The restrictions to which they refer are those imposed upon the railways when they were being built up a hundred years ago, so that the monopoly position which they then had should not be used to the disadvantage of other traders or of the public. Rates are fixed or altered only with the agreement of the Railway Rates Tribunal, and rates allowed in special cases must be allowed for all goods of the same class. The railway companies claim that they no longer hold the monopoly position they held when the legislation was passed owing to the growth of road transport which is not subject to the same restrictions, and they want the law altered to put them "on equal terms."

What they are *not* asking for is also of some interest and significance. They are not asking for the complete sweeping away of all past legislative restrictions nor for the abolition of the Railway Rates Tribunal. They intend that passenger fares shall still be subject to the Tribunal's decisions. The difference in their attitude may be accounted for by two considerations. Passenger traffic does not contribute the major part of railway revenue. According to the returns of the Ministry of Transport for 1937, total receipts from passengers were £58,600,000, and from parcels and goods £111,200,000. Secondly, and more important, the railway companies already own a large amount of shares in road passenger undertakings. Their investments in road transport of all kinds are over £13,000,000. This includes over £2,000,000 which they spent in the purchase of Carter Paterson and Hay's Wharf Cartage (which in turn owns Pickford's), but nearly all the rest is in omnibus companies. They can, and generally do, oppose any applications for licences to run a new road transport service or to add to an existing one. They thus have already a considerable hold on passenger traffic by road as well as by rail, but do not occupy the same position where goods transport is concerned. The continued existence of the Railway Rates Tribunal gives them the power to raise passenger fares with the backing of a nominally "outside" authority.

A further point about the companies' campaign is noteworthy. The three railway unions have put forward claims for increased wages and improved conditions. These were rejected by the companies on October 12, 1938. On November 8 the companies told the unions that, unless traffic receipts improved, they would apply to the negotiating machinery in the early part of 1939 for a reduction of wages. This move was evidently made, at least in part, with the object of frightening the unions into withdrawing their claims instead of proceeding with them to the next stage of the negotiating machinery, the Railway Staff

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National Council. The unions, however, decided to proceed, and on November 14 the R.S.N.C. met and failed to agree. As the Council consists equally of representatives of the unions and the companies, this is what usually happens. The claims could then be taken to the highest stage, the Railway Staff National Tribunal. This the unions decided to do on November 23. On the same day the companies' representatives visited the Minister of Transport, and on the following day the "square deal" campaign was launched. The timing of these moves by the companies shows that, apart from their immediate object, their effect has been to damage the chances of the men's claims.

No great response on the part of the public has been forthcoming to the companies' campaign. It is clearly realised to what extent their cry of "poverty" has been exaggerated. Certainly City opinion is not impressed, nor was it intended that it should be. In the middle of January the Southern Railway borrowed £7,500,000 of new capital in 4 per cent. Debenture Stock without any difficulty. This means that in future an extra £300,000 will have to be found each year for interest. The success of this new issue hardly agrees with the statement that:

> it has become impossible to raise new capital on reasonable terms (*Clear the Lines*, p. 9).

The public can see, too, that although large amounts have been spent on "luxury" trains like the Coronation Scot, the ordinary services have not been improved in recent years. Suburban trains are crowded and dirty; a cross-country journey involves as many changes and waits at wayside junctions as ever it did; in country districts bus and train time-tables seem deliberately arranged so that the two do not fit in with each other.

The outcome of the present campaign seems more likely to be some agreed compromise than that the railway companies will get complete freedom to wage a rate-cutting war against road transport. The question has been referred to the Transport Advisory Council by the Minister of Transport with a sympathetic recommendation but with a reminder that "other interests" have to be considered. Even if the restrictions were removed, the railway companies could only force their revenue up to standard by eliminating road competition and then by raising rates and fares to a level which would impose heavy burdens on all sections of the public. Apart from the recent fall in receipts due to the beginning of a new economic crisis, the root of the railways' difficulty in reaching standard revenue lies not in road competition only, but in the whole trend of economic development in this country since 1918. The railways were built to serve the needs of the flourishing and expanding British capitalism of the nineteenth century. Their structure and organisation contain a host of anachronisms from the point of view of post-war society. Among other factors such things as the decay of the export trades and the

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movement of industry from special areas to others nearer the main markets play a part in their decline.

These considerations show the importance of the other side of the companies' campaign, the threat to wages. *The Times* of November 24, 1938, repeats the warning :

> It is not in the case which the companies now put forward, but it will be in the public mind, that the heavy decline in railway revenues this year is imperilling the earning standards of the railway workers. Judged comparatively with the wage rates in other industries and services those of railwaymen are certainly not high ; it would be a social misfortune if the railway companies were obliged to make savings by reducing the earnings of their workpeople and possibly, by so doing, to set in motion a wider reduction of the nation's weekly spending power.

The Times is right ; wage rates of railwaymen, judged by any standard, are certainly " not high." The national minimum is 41s. a week, and according to the latest figures published by the Ministry of Transport, about 120,000 men are in receipt of a wage below 50s. a week. The establishment of a minimum wage of 50s. a week is the chief claim of the National Union of Railwaymen, in which the majority of the lower paid grades are organised.

In fact the drive to " reduce labour costs " has already begun with the intensification of economy measures that has been in force for some months. Hundreds of men have been dismissed and hundreds more rendered redundant. Staffs have been cut to the minimum for normal working and to the point where the question arises of danger to the men and to the general public.

But the movement now on foot is something bigger than the normal reaction to a fall in traffic receipts. The companies have something further in mind. Under the heading " Co-ordination of Transport," they write :

> To give the railways the equality for which they ask is a necessary condition before co-ordination can be achieved. It is only on equal terms that competitors can reach a good understanding, which must be for the benefit of the public. When that becomes a reality, road rates and rail rates can be co-ordinated under one control, and the railways will welcome such a development (*Clear the Lines*, p. 12).
>
> To free the railways from their restrictions . . . . is the first and an indispensable step towards a co-ordination of the country's transport (p. 14).

It is clear from this that the railways are not averse from doing a deal with the road transport concerns. But there are a large number of small road transport traders ; the average fleet is no more than four lorries. Before any " co-ordination " could take place these would have to be squeezed out of business, and then the big monopolists could come to an arrangement among themselves to fleece the public. At the time of writing private conversations are going on between representatives of the railways and of the road transport and other " interested parties." No doubt some agreed scheme will be presented

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to the Transport Advisory Council. But one thing is certain about this step towards " co-ordination " ; its object is to secure more profit for the big concerns out of transport as a whole, and this can only come ultimately out of the pockets of the transport workers, the smaller traders and the general public, in whatever guise the co-ordination is put forward.

One plan which has already received some publicity is the formation of a Transport Board, a plan which, while having the appearance of some measure of public control, actually contains grave dangers. Such a Board would be burdened from the very start with a vast mass of some £1,500,000,000 of capital, the dividends on which would be safeguarded and would occupy an even more privileged position than standard revenue does now. Charged with the task of earning these dividends the Board would rationalise vigorously with resulting increase of unemployment among transport workers. As has happened with the L.P.T.B., speed-up measures for the men would accompany worsened services and increased fares for the public.

It is true that the transport of the country needs reorganising, but the first step in this direction is due at the capital end. This is recognised by the *Economist* (December 10, 1938):

> The fundamental fact about transport would seem to be that there has been an over-investment of capital in the industry . . . . Some of this capital, in one branch or other of the industry, is redundant and has no real economic value. The attempt to pay a full return on all of it, if it can succeed at all, can do so only at the expense of imposing on the community costs of transport greater than can be justified on any economic basis.

It is generally admitted that railway capital contains a large proportion of " water." To quote the same authority again :

> In a normal industrial concern a solution would doubtless be sought in a reorganisation of the existing capital. Hitherto, such a suggestion has been countered by the argument that the companies' assets, taken as a whole, stand in their books at less than their replacement cost to-day. The real question, however, concerns earning power rather than book values. An ordinary industrial concern would recognise that part of its earlier capital expenditure, though still represented by assets, was no longer profitable, and should be written off (*Economist*, March 12, 1938).

But this reorganisation can and should be undertaken in such a way that it is possible for the industry to provide both an improved service for the public and a better standard of life for its workers. Out of railway receipts 80 per cent. goes in maintenance and running expenses, that is to say sixteen shillings out of every pound paid to the railways. The other four shillings goes in interest and dividends. If only a part of this were applied to improving services, lowering fares and raising wages, the railways would still be able to show a handsome profit.

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A Letter of Engels

[*The letter printed below, which has not previously appeared in English, has been translated for the* LABOUR MONTHLY. *Like so many of the letters written by Marx and Engels to friends who later proved false, it remained long unpublished. Karl Kautsky* (1854—1938) *withheld it until* 1933, *when it was included in the book,* "*Aus der Frühzeit des Marxismus,*" *which he completed that year but which, owing to the advent of Fascism in Germany, he was unable to publish until* 1935, *in Prague.*

Engels' letter was written on the opening day of the Congress at Erfurt, 1891, *where the German Social Democratic Party, emerging from the twelve years' illegality imposed by Bismarck* (1878-90), *had to consider a new programme suited to the new situation. After Engels' detailed criticisms of the official draft programme* (*June,* 1891), *which Kautsky did not publish until ten years later, Kautsky prepared an alternative draft of which Engels had, on the whole, approved, and to which he refers below. Kautsky was at this time* (*and until* 1917) *editor of the Party's theoretical organ,* "*Neue Zeit.*"]

London, 14 October, 1891.

DEAR KAUTSKY,

To my great astonishment I find that the "one reactionary mass" has suddenly appeared in your draft, as published in *Vorwärts*. I am writing to you about this at once, although I almost fear I am too late. This agitational phrase is like a shrill discord spoiling the whole harmony of brief, pointedly expressed scientific statements. For it is an agitational and extremely one-sided phrase, and therefore, in the apodeictic-absolute form in which alone it sounds effective, totally false.

False, because it expresses an *historic tendency*, genuine in itself, as an *accomplished fact*. At the moment when the social revolution is beginning, all other parties *appear*, in relation to ourselves, as a reactionary mass. Possibly they already *are* this also, having lost all capacity for any sort of progressive action, though this is not necessarily so. But at the *present moment* we cannot speak in that way, we cannot have the certainty which we express in the other clauses of the programme. Even in Germany, conditions may arise in which the parties of the Left, miserable though they are, will be forced to sweep away some of the colossal existing encumbrance of anti-bourgeois, bureaucratic and feudal rubbish. And in that case, precisely, they are not a reactionary mass.

So long as we are not strong enough to seize the helm ourselves and put our principles into practice, there can be, properly speaking, no question of our being opposed by *one* reactionary mass. Otherwise the whole nation would be divided into a majority of reactionaries and a minority of incapables.

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The people who broke up the régime of small states in Germany, who provided the bourgeoisie with elbow room for their industrial revolution and introduced unified conditions of commerce both for persons and for goods, being therefore obliged to give us ourselves greater freedom of movement, were they, in performing this, a " reactionary mass " ?

The French bourgeois republicans, who, in 1871-78, finally overcame the monarchy and clerical domination, granted freedom of the press, of association and of meeting on a scale hitherto unknown in non-revolutionary periods in France, who introduced compulsory education and raised and made universal a standard of teaching from which we in Germany might well learn, were they, in acting thus, one reactionary mass ?

The English of both official parties, who enormously extended the franchise, quintupled the number of voters, equalised electoral districts, introduced compulsory education and an improved standard of teaching and are still, every session, voting not only for bourgeois reforms but also for continual fresh concessions to the workers, are moving forward slowly and sleepily, but nobody can simply anathematize them as " *one* reactionary mass."

In short, we have no right to represent a tendency, which is gradually being realised, as a fact already accomplished, and all the less so since in England, for example, this tendency will *never* be fulfilled as an absolute fact. When the upheaval comes here the bourgeoisie will still be ready for all sorts of partial reforms. Except that to cling on to the partial reform of a system already overthrown becomes sheer nonsense.

The use of the Lassallean phrase is, *in certain circumstances*, justifiable in agitation, although there also it is enormously misused among us, for instance in *Vorwärts* since Oct. 1st, 1890. But *its place is not in the programme*, there it is absolutely false and misleading. Its position there reminds one of banker Bethmann, his wife, and the balcony which was proposed for his house : " If you build a balcony, my wife will go and sit on it and disgrace the whole façade for me."

I cannot refer to the other changes in the draft published in *Vorwärts*, as I have mislaid the paper and this letter must go.

The Party Congress has opened on a glorious date. Oct. 14th is the anniversary of the battles of Jena and Auerstadt, where old pre-revolutionary Prussia fell. May Oct. 14th, 1891, begin for Prussianized Germany the " internal Jena " which Marx foretold.

Your

F. ENGELS.

NOTES.

ERFURT PROGRAMME. Engels was this time successful in getting the " one reactionary mass " excluded from the German Social Democratic Party Programme, but most of his criticisms were disregarded and suppressed ; the programme adopted at Erfurt, which became a model for all other parties

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of the Second International except the Bolsheviks, disguised the class character of the State and ignored the dictatorship of the proletariat. The letter here published was only one of many efforts made that year by Engels to keep opportunism, "gradualism" and Lassallean abstractions out of the new programme and give it a genuinely revolutionary content. In this struggle, Kautsky, who from 1881 until shortly before Engels' death often visited him in London and enjoyed the intimate friendship, patient teaching and endless help which increased his own prestige, proved an unreliable ally. Only by a threat of publication in Austria could Engels persuade him to print in *Neue Zeit* (Feb., 1891), the Marx-Engels critique of the Party's foundation programme (Gotha, 1875), which the German leaders had suppressed for 16 years. Kautsky consoled himself by belittling the criticisms, dissociating himself from them and magnifying Lassalle. (*Neue Zeit*, February, 1891. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, p. 75).

ONE REACTIONARY MASS. Engels' first criticism of the Gotha programme (1875) had been that "Lassalle's high-sounding but historically false phrase is accepted: in relation to the working class all other classes are only one reactionary mass." (To Bebel, 18—28 March, 1875.)* He and Marx never ceased to oppose and ridicule this formula. Marx, whilst exposing the reactionary character of the peasant producer, for instance, had pointed even in 1852 to the growth of an alliance between peasantry and proletariat. (*Eighteenth Brumaire*, Chap. VII.); Engels developed the subject in his last writings on the peasant question (1894). For other references to the "one reactionary mass" Cf. *Selected Correspondence* of Marx and Engels, pp. 333, 401-403, 483-86; *e.g.*, "All the official parties united in one lump *here*, all the Socialists in one column *there*—great decisive battle. Victory all along the line at one blow. In real life things do not happen so simply." The opposition of Marx and Engels to this formula was bound up with their conception of democracy, and especially of the democratic republic, as the form necessary for advance to proletarian revolution and the "specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat" (p. 486). Cf. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*; Lenin's *State and Revolution.*

In Britain, where Communists in recent times have been applauded or sneered at for 'putting their marxism into cold storage' in supporting the Popular Front, the tradition of the "one reactionary mass" has been handed down from H. M. Hyndman, who adopted too much of his "marxism" from Lassalle. "Opposed to us all other parties form, as the old *Communist Manifesto* truly says, 'a reactionary mass.' Tory, Whig, Liberal and Radical are . . . shades of one colour" (*Justice*, May 1st, 1886). But the "old *Communist Manifesto*" said something very different.

DONA TORR.

**Selected Correspondence*, p. 333. The opening sentence of the Statutes of the First International, declaring that "the emancipation of the working-classes must be conquered by the working-classes themselves," was adopted in the Gotha Programme with the first phrase altered to "the emancipation of labour" and the Lassallean "reactionary mass" tacked on.

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A Powerful Weapon of Bolshevism*

THE APPEARANCE OF *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.* under the editorship of a commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and approved by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., is a big event in the ideological life of the Party. The Party received a real history worthy of it—a profound scientific work in the production of which the teacher of the Party, Comrade Stalin, most actively participated. The Bolshevik Party, the Soviet People, and the world proletariat received an ideological weapon of colossal theoretical power, a weapon which will further the task of the revolutionary reorganisation of the world.

The book brings forth the facts of the history of the Party in a well-constructed system pursuing the unity of scientific periodisation, as was proposed by Comrade Stalin in his famous letter, " On a Textbook on the History of the C.P.S.U." ; the formulation of these facts is connected with the history of the U.S.S.R. and is given against the background of the general historical and political-economic conditions.

The greatest theoretical value of *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.* consists in that here, in the historical cross-section, is given the theoretical basis of the *new* contributions that the genius of Lenin added to the treasury of Marxism. This book, with Stalinist theoretical profundity and clarity, proves how consistently Lenin forged the indomitable, ideological weapon of Bolshevism; how Lenin formulated the ideological, organisational and tactical basis of the Bolshevik Party —the Party of a *new type*, in principle fundamentally distinguished from the old reformist parties of the Second International; how, in the struggles against the enemies of Marxism, Lenin defended the theoretical basis of the Marxist Party.

All this was a great historical preparation for the creation of the Bolshevik Party, the Party of a *new type*, free from opportunism and irreconcilably opposed to opportunism, a Party capable of leading the proletariat in the seizure of power, in the socialist revolution, in the building of the socialist society.

The Bolsheviks perceived that after the death of Engels the Western European Social-Democratic Parties had begun to degenerate from parties of social revolution into parties of " social reform," and that every one of these parties, as an organisation, had become transformed from a leading force into an appendage of its own parliamentary group.

*Abridged translation from *The Bolshevik*, fortnightly organ of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., No. 17-18, September 15, 1938.

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The Bolsheviks understood that the proletariat was in need of not such a reformist party, but another kind, a new kind of party, a real Marxist party, a party of the social revolution, a party of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"The Bolsheviks wanted their party to be just such a new party," we read in the fourth chapter of *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.*

> And the Bolsheviks built and reared such a party. The whole history of the struggle with the "Economists," Mensheviks, Trotskyites, Otzovists, idealists of every shade, including the empirio-criticists, was a history of the rearing of precisely such a party. The Bolsheviks wanted to create a new, Bolshevik Party, capable of serving as a model for all those who wanted to have a real revolutionary Marxist party. The Bolsheviks were rearing such a party as early as the period of the old *Iskra*. They reared it with perseverance, persistance, in spite of all difficulties. The basic and decisive rôle in this preparatory work was played by such works of Lenin as *What Is To Be Done?*, *Two Tactics*, etc. Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* served the *ideological* preparation of such a party. Lenin's *One Step Forward—Two Steps Backward* served the *organisational* preparation of such a party. Lenin's book, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, served the *political* preparation of such a party. Finally, Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* served the *theoretical* preparation of such a party.

After such a thorough historical preparation, the Prague Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. [Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party] (January, 1912), launched the party of a new type, the Party of Leninism, the *Bolshevik* Party. The Prague conference carried through the cleansing of the proletarian party of opportunists, of Mensheviks. This was of momentous and decisive significance for the further development of the Party and the revolution.

A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U. shows how the Leninist theory of the socialist revolution has enriched and developed Marxism.

As early as 1905, in his masterpiece, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin projected the basic outlines of the theory of the socialist revolution. Heretofore, in our propaganda work, we usually dealt with only one side of this epochal Leninist work, that is, the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the democratic revolution, the line of the Bolsheviks which aimed at the hegemony of the proletariat, and an alliance with the peasantry, in the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

The third chapter of *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.* reveals in its full historical greatness the Leninist theory of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution, the new theory of the regrouping of forces around the proletariat toward the end of the bourgeois revolution for the direct transition to the socialist revolution.

Lenin brought to light and restored the brilliant theses of Marx, which had been immured by the opportunists of the Second Inter-

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national, regarding permanent revolution and the necessity of linking the peasant revolutionary movement with the proletarian revolution. But Lenin did not simply restore and reiterate these brilliant thoughts of Marx—" but developed them further and reformulated them into a coherent theory of the socialist revolution, bringing in a new factor as an *indispensable* condition for the socialist revolution—the *unity* of the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements of city and country as a requisite for the victory of the proletarian revolution." (*A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.*).

In 1915 Lenin discovered the law of the uneven economic and political development of capitalism. Proceeding from this law Lenin formulated his brilliant conclusion of the possibility for the proletariat to make a breach in the imperialist front at some one or several places, the conclusion of the possibility of the victory of socialism to begin with in several capitalist countries, or even in one, single capitalist country.

> This was a new, consummated theory of the socialist revolution, the theory of the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries, of the conditions for its victory, of the perspectives for such victory, a theory the bases of which were outlined by Lenin back in 1905 in his pamphlet *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution.* (*Ibid.*).

This theory differed basically from the conception which was prevalent among the Marxists in the pre-imperialist period of capitalism, when Marxists believed that the victory of socialism in one country was impossible, that the victory of socialism would take place simultaneously in all civilised countries. Lenin, on the basis of the data on *imperialist* capitalism cited in his remarkable book, *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, reversed this conception as obsolete, and provided a new theoretical conception in which a simultaneous victory of socialism in all countries is considered *impossible* and the victory of socialism in one, single capitalist country is acknowledged as possible.

The inestimable significance of the Leninist theory of the socialist revolution consists not only in that it has advanced Marxism and enriched it with a new theory. Its significance consists further in that it gives a revolutionary perspective to the proletariat in individual countries, unlooses its initiative for an attack on its own national bourgeoisie, teaches it to utilise the conditions of war for the organisation of such an attack, and strengthens its faith in the victory of the proletarian revolution.

Under the banner of this theory, under the banner of creative Marxism, the great October Socialist Revolution was victorious. The Leninist theory of the possibility of the victory of socialism in our country was successfully defended in the struggles with the opportunists, the enemies of socialism, by the continuer of the work of Lenin—Comrade Stalin. In the epoch of construction of socialist society in the

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U.S.S.R., in the new conditions of the class struggle of the proletariat, Comrade Stalin developed further the Leninist theory of the possibility of the victory of socialism, and armed with this theory the entire Bolshevik Party and the Soviet people.

In our country the great words of Marx, that "theory becomes a material force as soon as it seizes hold of the masses," have become a reality. Armed with the Leninist-Stalinist idea of the possibility of building a full socialist society, the Party and the Soviet people have achieved the victories of the First and Second Five-Year Plans of world historic significance, have built in the main a socialist society on one-sixth of the globe. Thus, before the whole world, have been proved the possibility and the historic inevitability of the replacement of the capitalist system by the socialist system.

The fourth chapter of *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.*, dealing with the famous book of Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, is devoted to the exposition and establishment of the *theoretical* basis of the Party of Lenin-Stalin—dialectical and historical materialism.

Marx, Engels and Lenin repeatedly spoke of the necessity of a brief and comprehensive exposition of the theoretical views of Marxism, of a popular and concise exposition of the teachings of dialectics. The fourth chapter gives just such a concise exposition and scientific establishing of the philosophical-theoretical views of Marxism, an exposition of dialectical materialism as a consummate and unified world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist Party.

Our Party, whose world outlook is dialectical materialism, has always approached its problems from the point of view of Marxist science. The fourth chapter of the book gives a number of remarkably vivid and interesting examples of the application of the dialectical method to the political activity of the party of the proletariat.

Thus, in the fourth chapter, we read:

> . . . if the transition of slow quantitative changes into rapid and sudden qualitative changes constitutes the law of development, then it is clear that revolutionary upheavals brought about by oppressed classes are entirely natural and inevitable phenomena.
>
> Hence, the transformation from capitalism to socialism, and the liberation of the working class from capitalist oppression, can be achieved, not by way of gradual alterations, not by way of reform, but only through a qualitative change of the capitalist order through revolution.
>
> Hence, in order not to make mistakes in politics, one must be a revolutionary, and not a reformist.
>
> Furthermore, if development takes place through the unfolding of inherent contradictions, through the clash of opposing forces on the basis of these contradictions, thus resolving these contradictions, it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is an entirely natural and inevitable phenomenon.
>
> Hence, the contradictions of the capitalist relations should not be glossed over, but exposed and unfolded, should not be suppressed, but should be developed to the end.
>
> Hence, in order not to make mistakes in politics, it is necessary to

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carry out an uncompromising proletarian class policy, and not a reformist policy seeking harmony between the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, not a conciliatory policy which assumes that capitalism "grows into" socialism.

That is how to understand the Marxist dialectical method, if one takes it in application to social life, in application to the history of society.

Heretofore, our propaganda textbooks on dialectical and historical materialism, as a rule, dealt with dialectics in such a "dry" manner, wrote of dialectics in so obscure and dry a style, enumerated so many laws of dialectics, failing to distinguish the primary from the secondary, to line up dialectics with this political activity of the Party of the proletariat, that very often we simply frightened people away from dialectics. . . . And, yet, dialectics is the very life, the soul, of Marxism ! The fourth chapter of *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.* demonstrates how dialectical materialism should be taught in a clear and interesting manner while maintaining a high scientific level.

The application of dialectical materialism to the phenomena in the life of society, to the study of the development of society, to the study of the history of society, is *historical materialism.* The fourth chapter makes an invaluable contribution to the theory of historical materialism of Marx-Engels-Lenin, constituting its continuation and further theorectical development. The theory of historical materialism is placed on a basis of the great experience of the entire struggle of the working class and—what is particularly important—on the basis of the experience of the construction of socialism in the U.S.S.R. This theory has now passed through such a historical test as never before in history.

The theory of historical materialism in *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.* bases itself on the experience of the entire history of humanity—from the primitive communal order of society to the victory of socialism. All social formations—the primitive commune, the slave system, feudalism, capitalism and socialism—are analysed from the point of view of the laws of the development of production, the laws of the economic development of society.

* * * *

The inexhaustible theoretical wealth contained in *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.* demands a thorough, patient, careful study and *mastery.* This book, of world significance, ideologically arms the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet people for the further struggle for communism, passing on the gigantic, vast historical experience of the Party of Lenin and Stalin to the world proletariat. It will be studied by, and through it will be educated, generations of fighters for communism throughout the world. The immediate important problem is, first of all, *to prepare well the propagandists* to master thoroughly the entire ideological wealth of the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This is a pre-condition for a correct and thorough organisation of the study of *A Short Course in the History of the C.P.S.U.*

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DOCUMENTS OF THE MONTH

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO MR. MIDDLETON DATED 9TH JAN. 1939

DURING the last 12 months the political situation nationally and internationally has progressively deteriorated.

The menace of the fascist powers has grown to alarming proportions under the encouraging hand of the British National Government, while at the same time that Government has shown itself completely incompetent to deal with domestic matters. Unemployment remains as bad as ever, working class standards and conditions are tending to decline and agriculture is in a state of chaos.

Democracy has been betrayed and fascist aggression has been encouraged in Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, China and elsewhere to such an extent that even the most vital interests of our own country are now jeopardised.

For these and other reasons a great volume of anti-Government feeling has grown up all over the country, even in the least expected quarters, and British Youth is being stirred by these events to a demand for some form of united action against the National Government based upon a real policy of peace.

This state of indeterminate opposition is liable to be swung over to the support of the Government by some international event, by a change in Chamberlain's foreign policy or by an appeal to National Unity if the crisis deepens. It is not at all unlikely that within the next few days or weeks Chamberlain will announce a reversal of his foreign policy upon the basis that he has tried appeasement and it has failed and that he must call on the Nation to unite behind him to fight fascism in what will be a purely imperialistic war. When that moment comes, if public opinion is allowed to remain in its uncrystallised state it will swing behind him, with results as disastrous as those of 1914-18 for the common people of this country and Europe.

There is to-day in this country the same quality of vague and undirected discontent which has formed the breeding ground for fascist movements in other countries, and it has in it, for that very reason, real elements of danger so long as it remains without any definite direction or leadership. This is particularly true so far as the younger electors are concerned.

From my experience during the last 12 months in the country, and I believe this must be generally admitted, the strength of the Labour Party has not increased in anything like the same proportion as the intensity of anti-Government feeling.

There has too come into being a very large body of agitation for some form of combined opposition. This agitation is, I am convinced, the true reflection of the experience of persons of all kinds and classes gained in carrying through combined work upon Spain, China and similar campaigns. Through such work many have become politically conscious for the first time and they realise the possibility of gaining their objective—the defeat of the National Government—by the translation of their co-operative endeavours for humanitarian ends into the field of politics.

The League of Youth, contrary to its own desires, has been rigidly confined by the National Executive in its contacts with other Youth Organisations and has, as a consequence I believe, failed to show any remarkable expansion in spite of all the efforts that have been made by the Party.

The rigidity of Party discipline at a time when many most loyal

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members are convinced that joint work with other organisations would lead to an increase of power, has led to the weakening of the opposition forces and to discouragement in many areas. The refusal to permit members of the Party to co-operate in anti-Government and anti-fascist work of any kind with other persons or groups active in the same direction. when accompanied by the spectacle of the Leaders of the Movement sharing the Albert Hall Platform with such typical reactionary members of the Government as Sir John Anderson and Mr. Ernest Brown, is not understood by the public generally and leads to the almost inevitable assumption that the Labour Party would rather combine with the National Government than with other opposition forces.

I have examined and re-examined this situation from one point of view and one only. How can we best help to protect the common people of Great Britain from the dangers of fascism and war that arise out of the present critical circumstances ? I regard this question as being identical with—How can we obtain the best chance of defeating the National Government in the next election ?

I ask my fellow members of the Executive to consider it objectively from this point of view and to ask themselves, as I ask myself, this further question. Is it not right under such circumstances to put this overriding necessity of defeating the National Government before all other considerations, so as to determine whether there is not something more effective that can be done ?

The growth of strength of the Labour Party either in opposition or in organisation is not such as to warrant the belief that the Party can defeat the National Government single-handed at a General election within the next 18 months. During that period of time an election is bound to take place, unless we are already engaged in an imperialist war under the aegis of the National Government before that time has expired.

It is to this last question, as to whether anything effective can be done, that I now address myself.

As I view the situation the following propositions can be accepted as the basis for a calculation of the electoral chances at the next General Election.

1. At the very best the Labour Party and the opposition Liberals fighting independently cannot, under any circumstances likely to exist within the next 18 months, win more than 266 seats, that is all those seats held at present and in addition all those in which there was a Government majority of 3,000 or less at the last General Election. Of these some 38 would be held by opposition elements other than Labour, giving a net figure of 228 for Labour.

2. There are at present 62 seats held by the National Government on a minority (31) or a majority vote of less than 3,000 (31) owing to opposition by two or more parties, of which at least 39 (majorities less than 1,000) ought to be winnable if the opposition is combined behind a single candidate.

3. In the remaining 330 seats (omitting Northern Ireland) which do not fall within category (1) above, apart from some 20 which fall within category (2) above there is little, if any, chance of the defeat of the National Government by a single Opposition Party. A number which may be variously computed, but which I compute in good circumstances as being 25-50 could be, I believe, won by a combined opposition. Such a number if successfully fought would give, with those seats of categories (1) and (2), the following result—Labour 228 plus (say) half of category (2) 20 : 248 ; other opposition parties, Liberal, I.L.P.,

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Communist, 38 plus half of category (2) 20: 58, and category (3) 25 making a total of 331, which would provide a working majority.

4. If the Labour Party and other opposition parties can win only these seats in category (1) and so are in a minority after the next General Election then it means another five years of National Government whether in its present or in an equally bad reconstructed form, which event will, in my view, be fatal to democracy and to any prospects for a socialist party for another generation.

If these premises are even approximately correct then they shew that the only alternative to the disastrous continuance in power of the National Government—which I assume that nobody desires—is the use temporarily of some tactic which will enable the essential extra electoral strength to be mobilised.

In most of the constituencies of category (3) the organisation of the party has never been and is not now strong enough to inspire any hope of a victory at the next election. It is in such constituencies particularly that Labour Party members are turning with a real degree of hope to the prospect of an effective and even winning fight in combination with all other anti-government and democratic forces.

If the above are the only two alternatives then failure to take every step to maximise opposition becomes tantamount to acquiescence in giving the National Government the opportunity of another term of office.

I certainly should not desire to encourage the Party to any combination with other non-Socialist elements in normal political times. I have in the past always strenuously opposed such an idea. But the present times are not normal, indeed they are absolutely unprecedented in their seriousness for democratic and working-class institutions of every kind. In such times it is impossible to overlook the fact that a too rigid adherence to Party discipline and to traditional Party tactics may amount to losing the substance of working-class freedom and democracy for the shadow of maintaining a particular type of organisation which is, as a mere machine, in itself of no value.

I fully appreciate that the whole case for a change of tactics is based upon the belief that without that change the Labour Party cannot defeat the National Government at the next election. I state these views, not because I am defeatist but because I believe that victory will only be based upon a frank appreciation of the true position as it exists. I am confident that the record of the meetings that I have addressed in the past year for the Party will satisfy my colleagues that I have done what little I could to help to strengthen the Party in all parts of the country.

In considering what tactics can or should be followed, the following points must be borne in mind :—

1. Everything possible must be done to increase the strength of the Party itself in all areas. For whatever tactic is to be employed a strong Labour Party is a vital ingredient.

2. There must be no permanent sacrifice of socialist principles even if a temporary postponement of some items of the Party's programme becomes necessary. At the same time it must be realised that with the present urgent threat to democracy and freedom in our country a progressive democratic block dominated by a numerically strong Labour nucleus would be vastly preferable to the continuance of the National Government in any form.

3. The Government that emerges in the event of the opposition succeeding must have a practical programme on both foreign and

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domestic policy including all those measures considered essential by those who are sponsoring it as the minimum necessary for the practical carrying out of a complete progressive policy.

4. The areas of co-operation sought, if any, must be wide enough to contribute effective increase in opposition power but not so wide as to bring in elements so discordant that combined working with them is impossible.

5. The programme must be simple, easily understood by the electorate and must be possible of attainment in a single Parliament.

6. The combined opposition, if any, must be presented to the country in such a form as to provide an effective counterblast to the "National" camouflage which will be used by the Government and also to convince people of all kinds that it is representative of the different interests and classes whom it is desired to attract within the Opposition.

7. One of the greatest assets of such a combination in my view will be its appeal to the unpolitically-minded electorate from the fact that political leaders have shown themselves prepared to drop their particular party aims in view of their urgent determination to meet and deal with the very apparent National dangers.

In this regard it must be borne in mind that the appeal to be successful must not only attract all of the nearly eight million voters who supported Labour at the last election but at least another 4-5 million voters who have either not voted before or who have given their votes to the other parties, the majority of whom, like many of the Labour Party supporters, are not politically instructed.

I believe that the above seven points include the more important of those considerations which arise from a study of the reaction of public opinion to current political issues. I am, of course, only able to judge of this, as we all are, from the particular contacts that I have in the country and from the study that I have made of the Press, etc. It is always a matter of extreme difficulty to assess the reaction of public opinion, as has been shown by the recent Mass Observation results. I am certain, however, that we are all apt to over-estimate the degree of political consciousness and intelligence in the electorate and to under-estimate the value of such simple conceptions or slogans as "National," "non-Party," etc., especially in critical times. It is for this reason that I attach very great importance to point (6) above.

As indicated I am convinced that we must consider and decide upon some new tactic of opposition if we are to succeed in defeating the Government. I am, moreover, certain that the course that I am about to suggest would lead to a great strengthening of the Party both numerically and in spirit.

If the Labour Party were to come out boldly as the leader of a combined opposition to the National Government, such a step would, I am sure, enormously increase its prestige and popularity in the country, and would bring within the ranks many who are not at present ready to join up because they are not convinced of its power or capacity to defeat the National Government.

It is in the light of all these considerations that I suggest the immediate adoption of the following course to be announced by the National Executive and to be considered and approved by a special Conference of the Party called for that purpose alone. In my view Whitsuntide will be much too late for the initiation of such a programme. Only the summer months will intervene between that date and a possible general election in the autumn, during which time it is notoriously difficult to carry out

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a political campaign. Added to this political developments are likely to be such during this and succeeding months as to result in the loss of the present opportunity which exists for consolidating the opposition behind the Labour Party before the Whitsun Conference is held. Once such an opportunity is missed it is unlikely to recur in time to be made use of for the next election. The course that I suggest is as follows :—

I. An immediate and special appeal to the Youth movement as a whole upon the basis of combined Youth activities and a special Youth programme incorporating the main items which are already to be found in the programmes of the various Youth movements, and which accord with the Labour Party's own programme. The principal of these would be as follows :

1. The T.U.C. Youth Charter.
2. Heads (1) and (2) of the programme set out under head II. below.

II. The issue by the Party of a manifesto inviting the co-operation of every genuine anti-Government party, or group of individuals who would be prepared to give support to the following items of policy :—

1. The effective protection of the democratic rights, liberties and freedom of the British people from internal and external attack.
2. A positive policy of peace by collective action with France, Russia, the United States of America and other democratic countries for the strengthening of democracy against aggression and a world economic reconstruction based upon justice to the people of all classes and nations.
3. Co-operation with the Trade Unions for advances in wages, bettering of working conditions, shortening of hours, raising of workmen's compensation and increase of holidays with pay.
4. Higher standards of nutrition especially for children and mothers.
5. Improvements in the conditions and standards of the unemployed, including the removal of the family Means Test.
6. Improved pensions for old-age pensioners and those older workers who should be encouraged to retire from industry.
7. Increased educational facilities freely open to all children irrespective of their parents' income, including an effective raising of the school-leaving age with grants to parents where necessary, and the expansion of nursery schools, secondary and university education.
8. An immediate and serious tackling of the problem of unemployment particularly in such districts as the distressed areas and Lancashire by the national planning of industrial development, and of the investment of new capital in industry and by rapidly increased public works to improve housing, education and other essential social services.
9. The full utilisation of the productive resources of the land by giving planned assistance to agricultural development on the basis of a fair wage to the agricultural worker, a just return to the farmer and an equitable price to the consumer.
10. The national control and co-ordination of all transport services with fair wages for those working in the various industries.
11. National and controlled planning of the mining and allied industries so as to enable fair wages to be paid to the workers and fair terms to be given to the consumers.
12. Control over the financial resources of the Nation through control of the Bank of England

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and the increase of direct taxation if necessary to enable the above programme to be carried through.

The above programme could, I believe, be carried through by a progressive Government with a wide popular support led by the Labour Party. It is very doubtful whether a purely Labour Government, even if it had a narrow majority in the House of Commons, could accomplish so much in a single term of office.

III. The statement by the Party that they would be prepared to assist in arranging for and to support combined opposition candidates in such of those constituencies not at present held by any opposition members, as could offer no reasonable chance of success in a straight fight between any single party opposition candidate and the National Government, provided that such candidate would agree to support the main items of the above programme set out in paragraph (II)

IV. To enter into negotiation with any opposition party or group that accepted the above basis for a combined opposition with a view to making such constituency arrangements as were possible.

V. To concert a nation-wide campaign on this basis to appeal for support and funds for the carrying into operation of this programme in conjunction with all other parties, groups or persons who had signified their willingness to participate upon the basis stated.

It would be necessary in such an announcement to state clearly and categorically that :—

(*a*) Neither the Labour Party nor any party group or person joining on the above basis would be expected to relinquish any part of their beliefs or programme except for the specific and limited purpose of the present emergency and for the creation of a temporary combination to fight the National Government.

(*b*) That the Labour Party only took this action because it was convinced that the emergency was such as to warrant and demand the temporary dropping of particular party interests in the cause of national and international salvation.

(*c*) That the Labour Party remained convinced that the only ultimate solution of the National and international difficulties were along the lines of its fullest Socialist programme.

I am personally convinced, after giving the matter the most full and prolonged consideration upon all the material available to me, that nothing short of a programme along these lines can enable the Party to organise the defeat of the National Government at the next election, and that to continue upon the present line of non-co-operation with any other opposition elements, while co-operating with the Government in such matters as the National Fitness Campaign and the National Register is to make certain that the National Government will retain power for a further term of years with results that will in my view be disastrous to the freedom and democracy of the British people.

I emphasise that it is only my view of the extreme urgency and the desperately critical nature of the present situation that compels me to submit this memorandum and to ask my colleagues to give it their most sincere consideration, in the earnest hope that the National Executive will in this time of grave crisis for the common people give such a lead as will instil into the people a new hope of peace and salvation and a determination under the leadership of the Labour Party to drive the National Government from office.

R. Stafford Cripps.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A Classic of Marxism

The German Ideology, Parts I and III, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Edited by Roy Pascal. (Lawrence and Wishart. 7s. 6d.)

HOW UNFORTUNATE IT is that Marx has never written a work wholly devoted to his philosophical conception, to an exposition of historical materialism! Frequently regrets such as this are expressed by students of Marxism. The obvious answer is, of course, that every work of Marx or Engels is an exposition of dialectical materialism. But it is an unsatisfactory answer; Marx himself was aware of the necessity of a coherent exposition of his philosophy and had in view to write a book on dialectics as soon as he had finished his studies on the economic structure of capitalism. The old Marx would then have worked out in greater detail, on the basis of profound study not only of all aspects of human thought, but of the history and nature of our economic life, what he had outlined in his youth after he had finally broken away from his attachment to philosophical idealism and mechanical materialism. *The German Ideology*, which has now been published for the first time in the English language, is not only Marx and Engels' final answer to the German philosophers. It is the programme for their life's work, the most complete and "systematic account of Marx and Engels' view of the relationship between the economic, political and intellectual activities of man," as Mr. Pascal sums it up.

"Philosophy," "dialectical materialism," they are awe-inspiring words for many socialist workers and students of the Labour Movement, which cause them to refrain from studying books dealing with them. They savour of abstract mystifications, which may be of ultimate importance but are impossible to understand except for the intellectual specialist, and are of no direct significance to our daily struggle which absorbs all our energies in the present critical situation. Marx, however, saw clearly the danger of theoretical mystifications. It is his principal aim in this book to tear the veil from those arrogant philosophers who hide their own ignorance of the world and their reactionary purpose behind high-sounding and difficult phrases. Marx was equipped with a complete knowledge of philosophy; he answered the philosophers on their own ground. But his answers are the embodiment of the Marxist principle of the unity of theory and practice. The philosophical answers which Marx and Engels give in *The German Ideology* are at the same time answers to the problems every one of us faces every day.

To take only one of the many problems which are so clearly answered in this book, especially in its first part, on Feuerbach: how frequent is the socialist propagandist discouraged by the apathy, the narrowmindedness of the workers. They will never understand what their true interest is, he exclaims; they will never break away from their bourgeois prejudices and narrowmindedness. How can we make them think and see clearly? How is it conceivable that they will be able to build up a socialist Britain with a new socialist attitude to life and work, when they are still so much the slaves of bourgeois conceptions? This scepticism is the result of a mechanical view of society which fails to understand the behaviour of man. This surprise and disappointment at the influence of bourgeois ideas over the workers

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shows an ignorance of its causes and of the method to dispel it. Marx was quite aware that

> the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas : i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it (p. 39).

But Marx knew also that conceptions which do not arise out of one's social circumstances are liable to be altered. The first prerequisite to achieve this end is ruthless clarity of language, is to speak out what is :

> If the theoretical representatives of the proletariat wish their literary activity to have any practical result whatsoever, they must first and foremost insist that all phrases be swept aside which obscure the real sharpness of the opposition and which hush it up. Such phrases actually give the bourgeois a chance to safeguard their interests by insinuating themselves among the communists on the strength of their philanthropic enthusiasms (p. 98).

But more important still is it to realise that the nature of man is not static, that it changes as the result of changed circumstances, which in turn are the result of his own activity :

> The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be comprehended or rationally understood as *revolutionary practice* (p. 198).

Self-changing by revolutionary practice means here not only practice in the course of a revolution, but every practice which " revolves " circumstances, which changes circumstances in such a way that the change helps to bring about the final emancipation of the working class, of humanity as a whole, in a revolution. Finally, therefore,

> both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution :* this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew (p. 69).

Historical materialism is no abstract philosophy, it is a guide to action. And it is also a stimulus to action. For in this book Marx and Engels show the concrete historical possibility and therefore necessity of the establishment of communism by the proletariat, without ever falling into a mechanical fatalism.

> Communism is for us not a stable state which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence (p. 26).

It is the ruthless realism which inspires the reader with confidence and optimism for the achievement of the final aim. And it teaches him not to be led astray by his own wishes.

This danger Marx and Engels clearly recognised in the " True Socialists," to the criticism of whom the third part of the *German Ideology* (its second part has not been translated) is devoted. Out of the backward social and political circumstances of Germany before the revolution of 1848 had arisen a group of thinkers who criticised the bourgeoisie in a seemingly radical way, but who actually served feudal reaction. For realism demanded the recognition that the moment was not ripe for a proletarian revolution, and that it was therefore in the interest of the workers that the bourgeoisie should be victorious over feudal reaction. This criticism deals effectively also with many of our " extremists " of to-day, who in fact support fascism by refusing to recognise the necessity of a people's front movement against fascist reaction, and who advocate socialism as the immediate aim of the day. This lack of understanding of the real situation has its counterpart in the illusion

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that almost all classes of society should be prepared to accept the socialist aim.

> With perfect consistency they (the " true socialists ") transform the relations of these particular individuals (the workers) into " *human* " relations ; they interpret the thoughts of these particular individuals concerning their own relations as thoughts about " *mankind.*"

The result is that

> " true socialism, concerned no longer with real human beings but with ' man,' has lost all revolutionary enthusiasm and proclaims instead the universal love of man " (pp. 80-81).

The discussion of the " true socialists " gives many illuminating answers to present-day reformists, whether of the Fabian or religious brand. And it shows the astounding range of knowledge and ruthless thoroughness which Marx and Engels applied in their criticism of others in the evolution of their own ideas.

The translation of the book is excellent and will help to a much better understanding of Marxism in the English-speaking world. The annotations might sometimes have been somewhat more extensive to help the untrained reader to a proper understanding of the book. Marx's works ought to be edited not only for the scholar, but for a wider public. Difficult words should be explained, points which were elaborated in other works of Marx and Engels should be noted so that the reader is stimulated to further reading. Sometimes this is absolutely essential, particularly when ideas are expressed by Marx or Engels which they revised in the course of their studies. In the *German Ideology* the family is, *e.g.*, accepted as the nucleus of primitive society (p. 17) ; attention should here have been drawn to Engels' changed view which he put forward in the " Origin of the Family." Not quite clear is the principle according to which words emphasised by the authors were also emphasised in the translation. Unquestionably it would have been useful if contrasts and points emphasised in the German (*e.g.*, *material* and *intellectual* on p. 39, or *activity* on p. 37) had been also emphasised in the English. A faithful translation should not take the liberty to alter or leave out the emphasis of the author.

But on the whole the book is extremely lucid and easy to understand, also for those who generally are reluctant to take up a book on such a difficult subject as " philosophy." Everybody anxious to gain a deeper understanding of our complicated society, and to find a guide to action, will greatly profit from reading and re-reading this most stimulating work.

WALTER CRAMER.

A Mixed Bag

The Common People. 1746-1938. By G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate. (Methuen.) 6s. net.

The Common People is really two books, run together and placed for convenience within a single jacket. One is a history of the growth of British industry from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day, as seen from below, that is, with special emphasis on the lives and conditions of the masses. The second is a history of the working-class movement during the same period. Obviously, the two subjects are closely connected and it is indeed one of the weaknesses of the book that they are kept too much apart : a result presumably of the dual authorship. According to a prefatory note, the portions dealing with economic structure and development were mostly,

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but not exclusively, drafted in the first place by G. D. H. Cole and the narrative matter mostly, but not exclusively by Raymond Postgate.
In general the first subject is better handled than the second and breaks more fresh ground, and it may also be said that the earlier chapters—dealing with the eighteenth century scene, the Industrial Revolution and the Peterloo period—are both more convincing and more interesting than the later.

When we reach the story of the first great wave of trade union activity and of the Chartists a curiously patronising note becomes apparent and this patronage often takes the place which should be taken by serious analysis and criticism. Thus, the Grand National is " this rather turbulent and excited mass of workers," and the word " excite " is repeated three times in as many pages. This patronising donnish approach is not unfamiliar to those who have had occasion to acquaint themselves with the previous writings of Mr. Postgate.

A little later the most extraordinary theory is advanced to explain the repeated failures of the thirties and forties :

> Psychologically the great mass of the British working class was in those years, and for fifteen years to come, diseased ; as it had indeed always been in a greater or less extent since the eighteenth-century equilibrium had been broken up. Unable to find any rational methods of escape, it turned to irrational. It demanded a sure promise of happiness—of food, rest from overwork, clothing and what delights it could imagine—within its own lifetime.

This seems to me both an unwarranted description of the British working class in the years when it was producing in Chartism the world's first great proletarian movement, and an unnecessarily far-fetched attempt to explain what can be explained much more easily on objective grounds. The fact surely is that the working class exhibited during these years the normal signs of its immaturity, as was inevitable in a class that had been coming into being only during the two previous generations and whose formation was even then still not completed.

The fundamental point about Chartism is that it was two-faced, looking back as well as forward, and this point is completely obscured by this subjective interpretation.

After having patronised the working class it is hardly to be expected that the book would avoid patronising Marx and Engels, and, sure enough, they appear in their now familiar rôle as writers of profound theoretical genius but at the same time as crazed and cranky foreign revolutionaries where practical matters were concerned. (And we were warned earlier on that " It has been the misfortune of the British revolutionary movement to depend too greatly upon foreign object lessons, American, French or Russian.") In short, they are very much what the common man has been taught to think of as typical " Professors."

How this misconception has been allowed to distort the account of their relations with Hyndman and the Socialist movement of the late nineteenth century has been fully discussed elsewhere and there is no need for me to re-cover this ground in the present review. The gibe at Engels for " patronising " the " wholly un-Marxist I.L.P." on its formation in 1893 suggests a remarkable ignorance alike of the relevant documents and of the elements of Marxism.

I should not like to think that Mr. Cole shares responsibility with Mr. Postgate for the passages that are confused, inaccurate, or omit significant facts. Take the statement that in 1923 " the Communist Party lost influence and members, its papers lost circulation, the new policy of ' Bolshevisation ' . . . caused fierce antagonisms." Actually the policy of " Bolshevisation " did not operate till 1925 ; the Communist Party, whose membership had certainly fallen low in 1922, began to recover markedly during 1923 ; while

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the circulation of its paper the *Workers' Weekly*—into which the former *Communist* had been transformed in February of that year—rose rapidly to a figure nearly three times that of the 17,000 to which the *Communist* had fallen. Of course Mr. Postgate may feel that Communist papers were bound to lose circulation after his resignation from the editorship of the *Communist* in 1922 ; but his feelings are hardly history.

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude upon this critical note. Taken as a whole *The Common People* is a remarkable and valuable contribution to our knowledge of its period. This applies especially to its sections on the economic development. Written with real socialist understanding they escape completely, so far as I can judge, all the dangers of exaggeration and facile generalisation from which some socialist writers have not been free. No statements are made which are not fully proved with facts and figures and the treatment of statistical material is masterly both for the way in which the book's conclusions are arrived at and for the clear light which it throws upon social conditions.

It is no small feat to set out masses of detail in such a way as to present a clear and living picture of a whole historical epoch. *The Common People* does this, and for doing it we have every reason to be grateful to Mr. Cole upon whom the bulk of this side of the joint work has apparently fallen.

A. L. MORTON.

Our England

England, My England by Jack Lindsay. Key Books, No. 2. (Fore Publications Ltd.) 2d.

This is a grand book to have published at 2d. Mr. Lindsay has written a history of the struggles of the English people, and it is remarkable how much he has managed to compress into 64 pages. His aim is to give us the facts which are under-emphasised in the history books, and to recapture for the present the spirit of independence and revolt of the past, to make us consciously honour those whose efforts and sufferings have built up for us " our England," the part of the English tradition and heritage that we can be proud of.

> It was incomparably the most important fact in the history of those years, Mr. Lindsay says, of enclosure in the late middle ages. So you read nothing about it in the history books at school. It would never do to let the English people know how the land was stolen from them. So the facts are simply suppressed from beginning to end, and that is called " impartiality " and " freedom from propaganda."

This book, then, is propaganda of the best sort, based on knowledge and understanding of history. Mr. Lindsay, for instance, illustrates from past examples the value of trial by jury, which has saved men like Lilburn and Cobbett from the malice of the ruling class, and adds

> The inroads into trial by jury which are one of the characteristics of present-day procedure are deadly attacks on our basic liberties.

" A man on his own can do nothing," Mr. Lindsay reminds us. The peasant revolts of the past owed their solidarity to communal village life and institutions, reproduced in all parts of England. So to-day the bringing together of workers in factories and mines creates the comradeship, the instinct for co-operation against exploitation, which is the essential basis for successful political organs of the working class. And the fact that this

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unity and this resistance can now be conscious enormously strengthens the modern proletariat as opposed to the peasantry of the middle ages. The periods in which the common people have been least able to resist oppression are those when they have had least opportunity to be united—e.g., from the 16th to the 18th centuries, the period of transition from peasant feudalism to the factory system (except when Cromwell's revolutionary army gave a new focal point for struggle), and after 1850, when a wedge was driven between the peoples of this country and of the colonies, and an artificially high standard of living was won for us at the cost of intensified colonial exploitation. " No people can be free that lives by exploiting others." Unfortunately the rise of the Labour Party coincided with this period of imperialist exploitation and much of its theory of peaceful transition to socialism was based on the illusion of constantly increasing prosperity (which in fact came from exploitation of the colonies). The Great War shattered the illusion, but the effects of the theory still hamper the movement which should have created a new political unity : Mr. Lindsay is right to draw attention to their historical causes.

One defect mars the book, and unless pointed out might defeat its purpose. It is a record of glorious struggle of the common people against their overlords and masters, of magnificent fights : yet just because the author concentrates on the separate interests of the working classes he gives a general impression of continuous defeats. This has an effect contrary to that intended. It is also rather misleading. For the working classes have also great victories to their credif in the past, as well as glorious defeats. Marx pointed out, for instance, that the English revolution would never have achieved all it did without the " plebeian methods " of the Independents. That the bourgeoisie afterwards turned round on its allies, the Levellers, does not alter the fact that the victory of the Cromwellian armies was due to the efforts and sacrifices of the common soldier. And in so far as Cromwell and the parliamentary leaders were the leaders of a united nation against reaction they were the leaders of a popular and progressive movement, were predecessors whose tradition the modern working-class movement inherits. We look back with pride to Lilburn and the Levellers in the 17th century, certainly : but let us not forget Milton's impassioned defence of a free press, Cromwell's demand for a people's army, Archbishop Cranmer and the other 16th century martyrs, great as well as humble, who were burned for daring to say what they thought. These were representatives of the bourgeoisie, no doubt, but let us not surrender them to Chamberlain (not that he is likely to want to remember them) ; they were members of a class that was then progressive, leading a national struggle aginst intolerable economic and social and political conditions, just as much as John Ball or Wat Tyler. All England's past is ours, including the best part of the past of the bourgeoisie. Its victories would have been impossible without the efforts of the common people, and we have just as much right to claim its struggles as part of the progressive tradition as we have to call upon members of the middle class who are oppressed and frustrated by monopoly capitalism to-day to unite with the progressive class of to-day—the proletariat.

This criticism is of a point of emphasis in Mr. Lindsay's book, of which the total achievement is excellent. He never forgets his main purpose, which is to show how the instinct of working people for co-operation, spontaneous organisation, unity, loyalty and discipline in mutual resistance to oppression have always been there ; trade unionism, co-operatives, united struggle have their roots deep in the past of the English people ; where this blind groping instinctive union of oppressed against oppressors has failed has been for lack of a constructive social theory to guide its spontaneous

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action. Yet even here Mr. Lindsay points out how many English popular leaders—Ball, Winstanley, Owen, the Chartists—had grasped aspects of a class theory of politics. He implies that once this class theory is thoroughly assimilated by the English working-class movement, which after six centuries of struggle already has the instincts of co-operation, loyalty and resistance to oppression in its blood, then there is nothing which that class cannot achieve.

Mr. Lindsay gives one instance of a victory of the workers (with the help of many of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie) when during the American civil war they forced a reactionary government to change its policy and to support the progressive and democratic North rather than the slave-owning South with which the British government naturally sympathised. The symbol of this victory of the sense of decency of the common people of our country stands to-day in the statue of Abraham Lincoln outside the Houses of Parliament, as a reminder to our legislators. But they have forgotten the lesson. How long will it be before we, the ordinary decent people, teach them another lesson, and put a statue of Negrin there too, to celebrate the victory of another free and democratic people ? That would be in the true, the best tradition of " our England."

CHRISTOPHER HILL.

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Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices:

43 MUSEUM STREET,

New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1

Telephone: HOLBORN 6656

The Editor of The *Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions.

The articles in The *Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

Subscription Rates on Application

WHOLESALE:

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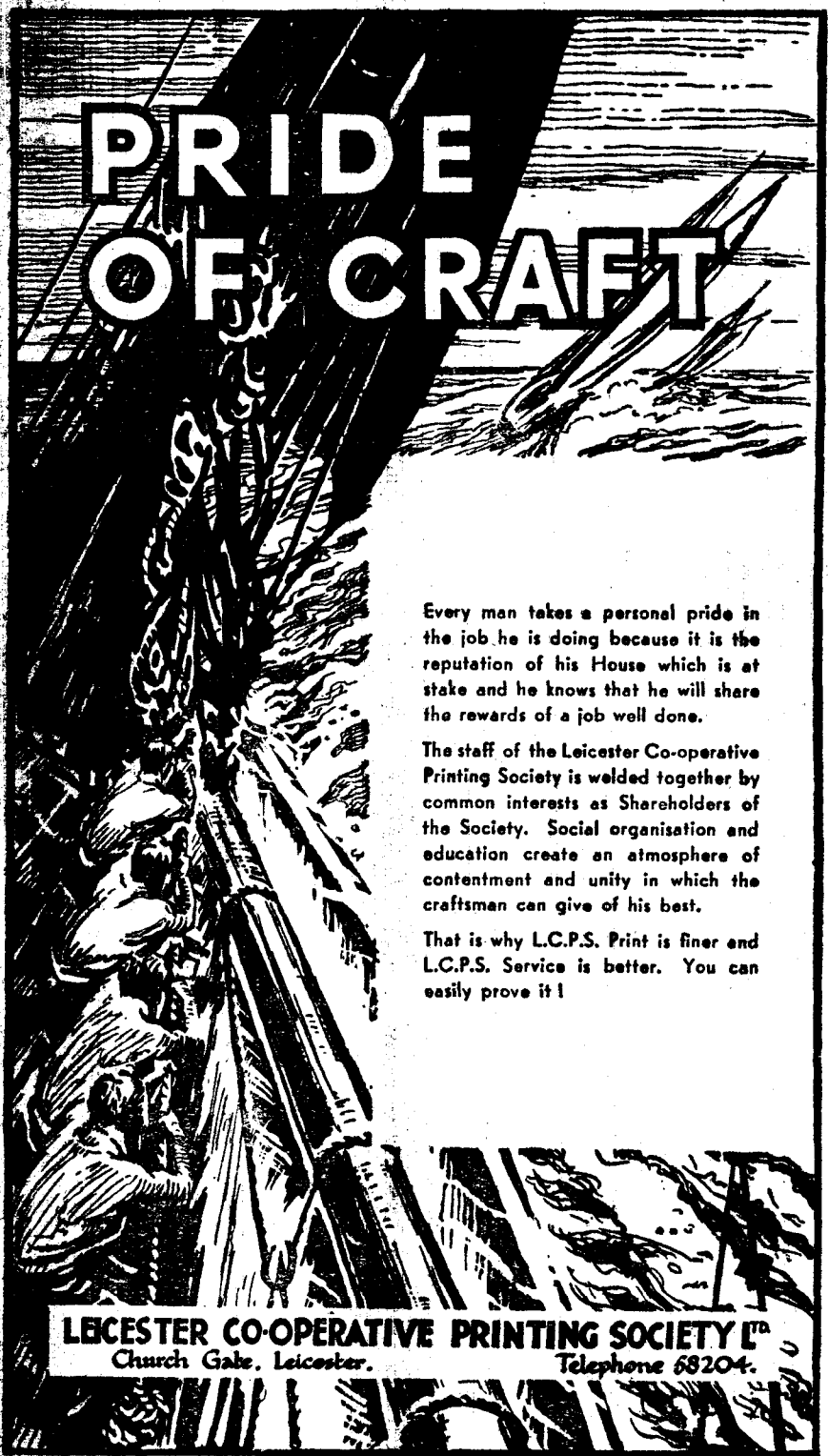
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